Sound (nada) is believed to be the heart of the process of creation. In Hinduism, the sacred syllable Om embodies the essence of the universe - it is the "hum" of the atoms and the music of the spheres - and sound in general represents the primal energy that holds the material world together. Nada Brahma is a primal word in Indian spirituality, a primal word that also refers to India's great classical music. Since the most ancient times, music in India has been practiced as a spiritual science and art, a means to enlightenment. Sangita, which originally meant drama, music and dance, was closely associated with religion and philosophy. At first it was inextricably interwoven with the ritualistic and devotional side of religious life. The recital and chant of mantras has been an essential element of vedic ritual throughout the centuries. According to Indian philosophy, the ultimate goal of human existence is moksha, liberation of the atman from the life-cycle, or spiritual enlightenment; and nadopasana (literally, the worship of sound) is taught as an important means for teaching this goal. The highest musical experience is ananda, the "divine bliss." This devotional approach to music is a significant feature of Indian culture.

The origin of Indian music is enshrined in beautiful tales and legends. It is common Hindu practice to attribute the beginning of a branch of learning to a divine origin through the agency of a rishi. Shiva, also called Nataraja, is supposed to be the creator of Sangita, and his mystic dance symbolizes the rhythmic motion of the universe. Curt Sachs (1881-1959) who played the leading role among early modern scholars in the field organology -- the study of musical instruments and their musical and cultural contexts, has said, that the South Indian drum tambattam that was known in Babylonia under the name of timbutu, and the South Indian kinnari shared its name with King David's kinnor. Arrian, the biographer of Alexander, also mentions that the Indian were great lovers of music and dance from earliest times.

Sir Yehudi Menuhin (1916-1999), American-born violinist, one of the foremost virtuosos of his generation, has written: "We would find all, or most, strands beginning in India; for only in India have all possible modes been investigated, tabulated, and each assigned a particular place and purpose. Of these many hundreds, some found their way to Greece; others were adopted by nomadic tribes such as the Gypsies; others became the mainstay of Arabic music. Indian classical music, compared with our Western music, is like a pure crystal. It forms a complete perfected world of its own, which any admixture could only debase. It has, quite logically and rightly, rejected those innovations which have led the development of Western music into the multiple channels which have enabled our art to absorb every influence under the sun. Freedom of development in Indian music is accorded the performer, the individual, who, within fixed limits, is free to improvise without any restraint imposed externally by other voices, whether concordance or discordant - but not to the basic style, which exclude polyphony and modulation."

Author Claude Alvares has said, that the Indian system of talas, the rhythmical time-scale of Indian classical music, has been shown (by contemporary analytical methods) to possess an extreme **mathematical complexity.** The basis of the system is not conventional arithmetic, however, but more akin to what is known today as pattern recognition.

Indian music is art nearest to life. That is why Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1856-1939) a 1923 Nobel Laureate in Literature, has aptly described Indian music "not an art but life itself."





Introduction

"Even if he be an expert in the Revealed and the traditional scriptures, in literature and all sacred books, the man ignorant of music is but an animal on two feet."

"He who knows the inner meaning of the sound of the lute, who is expert in intervals and in modal scales and knows the rhythms, travels without effort upon the way of liberation.

- (**Yajnavalkya Smriti** III, 115).

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Sound (nada) is believed to be the heart of the process of creation. In Hinduism, the sacred syllable **Om** embodies the essence of the universe - it is the "hum" of the atoms and the music of the spheres - and sound in general represents the primal energy that holds the material world together. **Sangita**, the Indian tradition of music, is an old as Indian contacts with the Western world, and it has graduated through various strata of evolution: primitive, prehistoric, Vedic, classical, mediaeval, and modern. It has traveled from temples and courts to modern festivals and concert halls, imbibing the spirit of Indian culture, and retaining a clearly recognizable continuity of tradition. Whilst the words of songs have varied and altered from time to time, many of the musical themes are essentially ancient.

The music of India is one of the oldest unbroken musical traditions in the world. It is said that the origins of this system go back to the Vedas (ancient scripts of the Hindus). Sangita, which originally meant drama, music and dance, was closely associated with religion and philosophy. At first it was inextricably interwoven with the ritualistic and devotional side of religious life. The recital and chant of mantras has been an essential element of Vedic ritual throughout the centuries. According to Indian philosophy, the ultimate goal of human existence is moksha, liberation of the atman from the life-cycle, or spiritual enlightenment; and **nadopasana (literally, the worship of sound)** is taught as an important means for teaching this goal. The highest musical experience is ananda, the "divine bliss." This devotional approach to music is a significant feature of Indian culture. The Indian music tradition can be traced to the Indus (Saraswati) Valley civilization. The goddess of music, **Saraswati,** who is also the goddess of learning, is portrayed as seated on a white lotus playing the **vina.**



Bow-harps and Flutes - Amaravati A.D. 200. - Vina in the hands of Goddess Saraswati (source: The Legacy of India - edited by G. T. Garrett).

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Alain Daneliou a.k.a **Shiv Sharan** (1907-1994), son of French aristocracy, author of numerous books on philosophy, religion, history and arts of India, including **Virtue, Success, Pleasure, & Liberation : The Four Aims of Life in the Tradition of Ancient India**. He was perhaps the first European to boldly proclaim his Hinduness. He settled in India for fifteen years in the study of Sanskrit. In Benaras Daniélou came in close contact with Karpatriji Maharaj, who inducted him into the Shaivite school of Hinduism and he was renamed Shiv Sharan. After leaving Benaras, he was also the director of Sanskrit manuscripts at the Adyar Library in Chennai for some time. He returned to Europe in 1960s and was associated with UNESCO for some years .While in Europe, Daniélou was credited with bringing Indian music to the Western world. This was the era when sitar maestro Ravi Shankar and several other Indian artists performed in Europe and America. During his years in India, Daniélou studied Indian music tradition, both classical and folk traditional, and collected a lot of information from rare books, field experience, temples as well as from artists. He also collected various types of instruments.



Alain Daniélou was credited with bringing Indian music to the Western world.

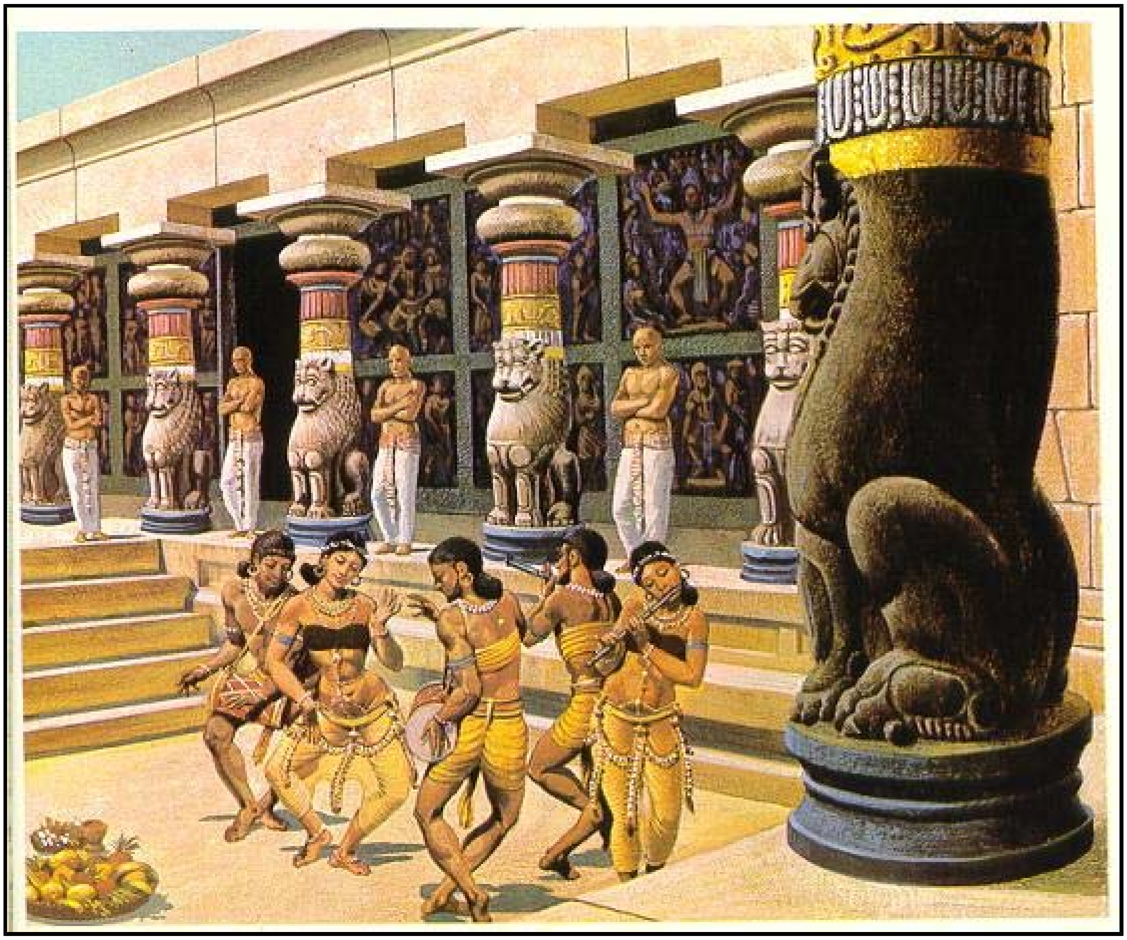
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He has written:

"Under the name of **Gandharva Vedas**, a general theory of sound with its metaphysics and physics appears to have been known to the ancient Hindus. From such summaries: **The ancient Hindus were familiar with the theory of sound (Gandharva Veda), and its metaphysics and physics.** The hymns of the Rig Veda contain the earliest examples of words set to music, and by the time of the Sama Veda a complicated system of chanting had been developed. By the time of the **Yajur Veda**, a variety of professional musicians had appeared, such as lute players, drummers, flute players, and conch blowers."

The origin of Indian music is enshrined in beautiful tales and legends. It is common Hindu practice to attribute the beginning of a branch of learning to a divine origin through the agency of a rishi. Shiva, also called Nataraja, is supposed to be the creator of Sangita, and his mystic dance symbolizes the rhythmic motion of the universe. He transmitted the knowledge of cosmic dance to the rishi Bharata, through one of his ganas. Tandu. The dance is called tandava and Bharata thus became the first teacher of music to men, and even to apsaras, the heavenly dancers. Similarly, the rishi Narada, who is depicted as endlessly moving about the universe playing on his vina (lute) and singing, is believed to be another primeval teacher of music.

Buddhist texts also testify to the prevalence of Sangita, both religious and secular, in early India. Music in India, however, reached its zenith during the **Gupta period**, the classical age of the Indian art and literature.



Music in India, however, reached its zenith during the Gupta Empire, the classical age of the Indian art and literature.

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Indian music is based upon a system of *ragas* and is improvised or composed at the moment of performance. The notes which are to convey certain definite emotions or ideas are selected with extreme care from the twenty-five intervals of the *sruti* scale and then grouped to form a raga, a mode or a melodic structure of a time. It is upon this basic structure that a musician or singer improvises according to his feeling at the time. Structural melody is the most fundamental characteristic of Indian music. The term *raga* is derived from Sanskrit root, ranj or raj, literally meaning to color but figuratively meaning to tinge with emotion. The essential of a raga is its power to evolve emotion. **The term has no equivalent in Western music, although the Arabic maqam iqa corresponds to it**. Oversimplified, the concept of raga is to connect musical ideas in such a way as to form a continuous whole based on emotional impact. There are, however, mixed ragas combined in a continuous whole of contrasting moods. Technically, raga is defined as "essentially a scale with a tonic and two axial notes," although it has additional characters.

Musical notes and intervals were carefully and mathematically calculated and the Pythagorean Law was known many centuries before Pythagoras propounded it. They were aware of the mathematical law of music.

(source: **India: A synthesis of cultures – by Kewal Motwani** p. 78-95).

The word raga appears in **Bharata's Natyasastra**, and a similar concept did exist at the time, but it was **Matanga** (5th century) who first defined raga in a technical sense as "that kind of sound composition, consisting of melodic movements, which has the effect of coloring the hearts of men." This definition remains valid today. Before the evolution of the raga concept in Bharata's time, jati tunes with their fixed, narrow musical outlines constituted the mainstay of Indian music. These were only simple melodic patterns without any scope for further elaboration. It was out of these jati tunes that a more

comprehensive and imaginative form was evolved by separating their musical contents and freeing them from words and metres.



Music lessons.

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Indeed a raga is basically a feeling, the expression of which has come to be associated with certain notes and twists of melody. A musician may compose in the same raga an indefinite number of times, and the music can be recognized in the first few notes, because the feelings produced by the musician's execution of these notes are intensely strong. The effect of Indian music is cumulative rather than dramatic. As the musician develops his discourse in his raga, it eventually colors all the thoughts and feelings of the listeners. Clearly, the longer a musician can dwell on and extend the theme with artistic intensity the greater the impact on the audience.

Alain Danielou (1907-1994) head of the UNESCO Institute for Comparative Musicology wrote:

""Unlike Western music, which constantly changes and contrasts its moods, Indian music, like Arabic and Persian, always centers in one particular emotion which it develops, explain and cultivates, upon which it insists, and which it exalts until it creates in the hearer a suggestion almost impossible to resist. The musician, if he is sufficiently skilled, can "lead his audiences through the magic of sound to a depth and intensity of feeling undreamt of in other musical systems."

(source: **Northern Indian Music - By Alain Danielou** Praeger, 1969 p. 115).



Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy has written: "Indian music is essentially impersonal, reflecting "an emotion and an experience which are deeper and wider and older than the emotion or wisdom of any single individual. Its sorrow is without tears, its joy without exultation and it is passionate without any loss of serenity. It is in the deepest sense of the word all human."

(source: **The Dance of Shiva - By Ananda Coomaraswamy** p. 94).

It is an art nearest to life; in fact, **W. B. Yeats** called Indian music, **"not an art, but life itself," although its theory is elaborate and technique difficult.**

The possible number of ragas is very large, but the majority of musical systems recognize 72 (thirty-six janaka or fundamental,

thirty six janya or secondary). New ragas, however, are being invented constantly, as they have always been, and a few of them will live to join the classical series. Many of the established ragas change slowly, since they embody the modes of feeling meaningful at a particular time. It is for this reason that it is impossible to say in advance what an Indian musician will play, because the selection of raga is contingent upon his feelings at the precise moment of performance.

Indian music recognizes seven main and two secondary notes or svaras. Representing definite intervals, they form the basic or suddha scale. They can be raised or lowered to form the basic of suddha scale. They can be raised or lowered to form other scales, known in their altered forms as vikrita. The chanting of the Sama Veda employed three to four musical intervals, the earliest example of the Indian tetrachord, which eventually developed into a full musical scale. From vaguely defined musical intervals to a definite tetrachord and then to a full octave of seven suddha and five vikrita was a long, continuous, and scientific process. For instance, **Bharata's Natyasastra**, the earliest surviving work on Indian aesthetics variously dated between the second century B.C. and the fourth century A.D., in its detailed exposition of Indian musical theory, refers to only two vikrita notes, antara and kakali. But in the **Sangita Ratnakara**, an encyclopedia of Indian music attributed to **Sarngadeva** (1210-1247), the number of vikritas is no less than nineteen; shadja and panchama also have acquired vikritas. It was during the medieval period that **Ramamatya** in the south, and **Lochana-kavi** in the north in his **Ragatarangini** refered to shadja and panchama as constant notes. Indian music thus came to acquire a full fledged gamut of mandra, madhya, and tar saptak.

The scale as it exists today has great possibilities for musical formations, and it has a very extensive range included in the microtonal variations. The microtones, the twenty-two **srutis**, are useful for determining the correct intonation of the notes, their bases, and therefore their scales (**gramas**). The Indian scale allows the musician to embellish his notes, which he always endeavors to do, because grace plays the part in Indian music that harmony does in European music.

Whilst Indian music represents the most highly evolved and the most complete form of modal music, the musical system adopted by ore than one-third of mankind is Western music based on a highly developed system of harmony, implying a combination of simultaneously produced tones. Western music is music without microtones and Indian music is music without harmony. The strongly developed harmonic system of Western music is diametrically opposed in conception and pattern to the melodic Indian system. Harmony is so indispensable a part of Western music today that Europeans find it difficult to conceive of a music based on melody alone. Indians, on the other hand, have been for centuries so steeped in purely melodic traditions that whilst listening to Western music they cannot help looking for a melodic thread underlying the harmonic structures.



Indian musical instruments are remarkable for the beauty and variety of their forms, which the ancient sculptures and paintings in caves of India have remained unchanged for the last two thousand years.

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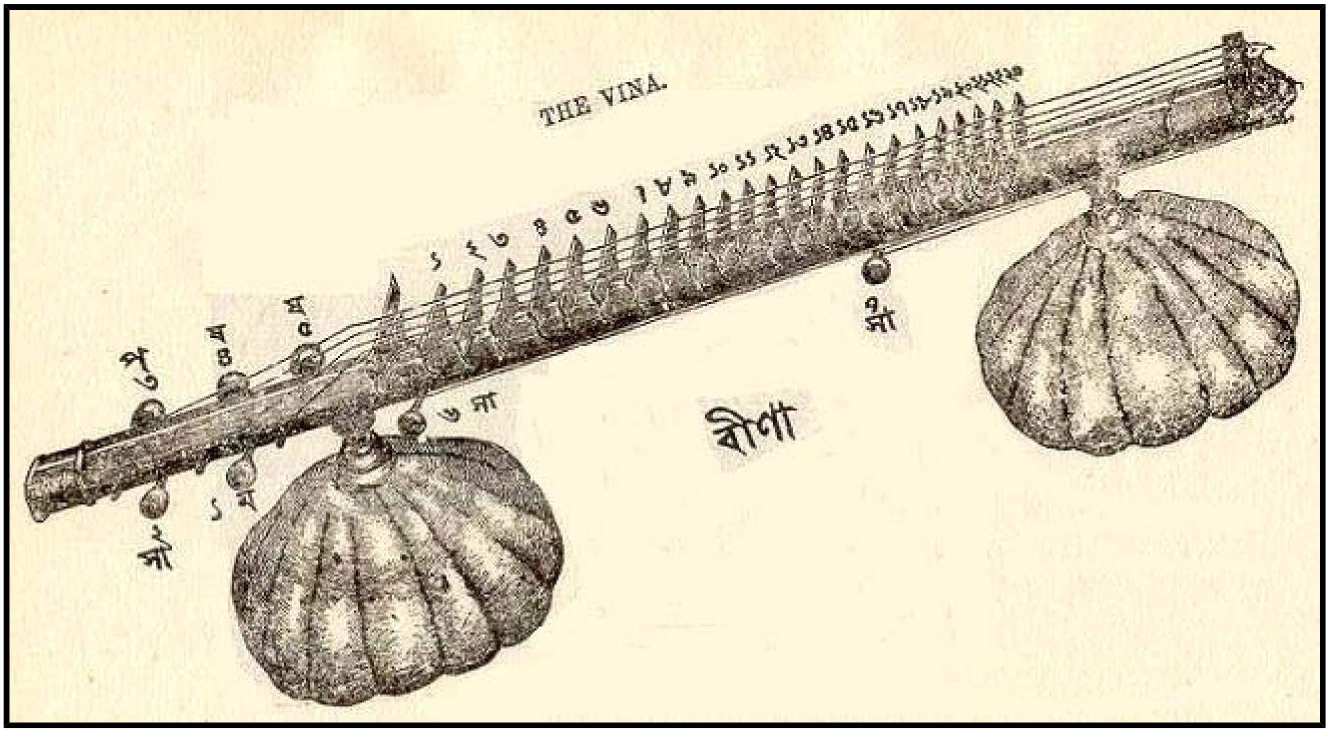
The fundamental and most important difference between the European and Indian systems of rhythm is respectively one of multiplication and addition of the numbers two and three. The highly developed tala, or rhythmic system with its avoidance of strict metre and its development by the use of an accumulating combination of beat subdivisions, has no parallel in Western music. On the other hand, the Indian system has no exact counterpart to the tone of the tempered system, except for the keynote, of Western music. Consequently, just and tempered intonations are variously conceived which eliminate the possibility of combining the melodic interval theory of the sruti system with the Western modulating, harmonic, arbitrarily tempered theory of intervals. With its tempered basis, larger intervals, and metred rhythms, Western music, is more easily comprehended than Indian music, which seems to require a certain musical aptitude and ability to understand its use of microtones, the diversification of the unmetred tala, and the subtle and minutely graded inflection.

Western music, as it appears today, is a relatively modern development. The ancient Western world was aware of the existence of a highly developed system of Indian music. According to **Curt Sachs** (1881-1959) author of **The History of Musical Instruments** (W W Norton & Co ASIN 0393020681) it was the **South Indian drum tambattam that was known in Babylonia under the name of timbutu, and the South Indian kinnari shared its name with King David's kinnor, Strabo referred to it, pointing out that the Greeks believed that their music, from the triple point of view of melody, rhythm, and instruments, came to them originally from Thrace and Asia.**

Arrian, the biographer of Alexander, also mentions that the Indians were great lovers of music and dance from earliest times. The Greek writers, who made the whole of Asia, including India, the sacred territory of Dionysos, claimed, that the greater part of music was derived from Asia. Thus, one of them, speaking of the lyre, would say that he caused the strings of the Asian cithara to vibrate. Aristotle describes a type of lyre in which strings were fastened to the top and bottom, which is reminiscent of the Indian type of single-stringed ektantri vina.

Curt Sachs considers India the possible source of eastern rhythms, having the oldest history and one of the most sophisticated rhythmic development. It is probably no accident that Sanskrit, the language of

India, is one in which there is no pre-determined accent upon the long and short syllables; the accents are determined by the way in which it falls in the sentence. Sanskrit developed in the first thousand years B.C. Each section of the ancient holy book, the Rigveda, has a distinct rhythm associated with each section so that the two aspects are learned as one.



The ancient Vina: This one instrument alone is sufficient evidence of the development to which the art had attained even in those early days.

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The vina is really neither a lute nor a harp, although it is commonly translated in English as lute. Generally known in its construction as bow-harp, the vina must have originally been developed from the hunting bow, a type of musical bow, pinaka, on which a tightly drawn string was twanged by the finger or struck with a short stick. To increase the resonance a boat-shaped sound box was attached, consisting of a small half-gourd of coconut with a skin table or cover, through which a bamboo stick was passed longitudinally, bearing a string of twisted hair resting on a little wooden bridge placed on the skin table. This was the ekatari, or one-stringed lute of India, which soon produced its close relative, the dvitari or two-stringed lute. Later, additional strings were inevitably added. Whilst it is possible to trace the passage of the slender form of the fingerboard instrument, pandoura, from Egypt to Greece, it was not until they came into contact with the Persians that the Greeks became acquainted with the bow, a fact which may reinforce the view of the Indian origin of the Greek lute.

Although many varieties of the vina have been evolved, it existed in its original form, now extinct, in the vedic and pre-vedic times. This is known from the excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. There is sufficient evidence that some of these musical instruments were constructed according to the heptatonic, sampurna, scale with seven notes. However, in the other contemporary civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, similar instruments have been found. The vina is often shown in the hands of the musicians on the early Buddhist sculptures at Bhaja, Bharhut, and Sanchi and is still in use in Burma and Assam. In Africa, it is used by many Nilotic tribes. A bow-barp, known as an angle-harp, closely resembling the Indian vina can be seen in the mural paintings at Pompeii.



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The two earliest Greek scales, the Mixolydic and the Doric, have an affinity to early Indian scales. Some recent British writers, for example the editors of The New Oxford History of Music, have attempted to exclude Indian influence by making the somewhat strange suggestion that the term "India" meant countries much nearer. Whilst the evidence pointing to the direct influence of India on Greek interest in Indian art. In addition, there are parallels between the two systems, which may or may not be connected. **It is certainly true that the seven note scale with three octaves was known in India long before the Greeks were familiar with it. Pythagoras scheme of cycle of the fifth and cycle of the fourth in his system of music is exactly the same as the sadjapancama and saja-madhyama bhavas of Bharata.** Since Bharata lived several centuries after Pythagoras, it has been suggested that he borrowed the scheme from Pythagoras. At the same time it has been pointed out that Indian music, dating as it does from the early Vedic period, is much anterior to Greek music, and that it is not unlikely that Pythagoras may have been indebted to Indian ideas. In almost all other fields of scholarship in which he was interested, a close identity between his and the older Indian theories has already been noted.

Whilst no title of any Sanskrit work on music translated at Baghdad is available, **there is not doubt that Indian music influenced Arab music.** The well-known Arab writer **Jahiz**, recording the popularity of Indian music at the Abbasid Court, mentions an Indian instrument known as kankalah, which was played with a string stretched on a pumpkin. This instrument would appear to be the kingar, which is made with two gourds. Knowledge of Indian music in the Arab world is evidenced by an Arab author from Spain, who refers to a book on Indian tunes and melodies. Many technical terms for Arab music were borrowed from Persia and India. Indian music, too, was influenced in return, incorporating Persio-Arab airs, such as Yeman and Hiji from Hijaz. At the beginning of their rise to power, the Arabs themselves had hardly any musical system worth noting and mainly practiced the existing system in the light of Greek theory. Since Indian contact with western Asia had been close and constant, it would appear likely that the Arabic maqam iqa is the Persian version of the Indian melodic rhythmic system, **traga tala, which had existed for more than a thousand years before maqam iqa was known.**



Yehudi Menuhin (1916-1999) had one of the longest and most distinguished careers of any violinist of the twentieth century. He was convinced that:

""We would find all, or most, strands beginning in India; for only in India have all possible modes been investigated, tabulated, and each assigned a particular place and purpose. Of these many hundreds, some found their way to Greece; others were adopted by



nomadic tribes such as the Gypsies; others became the mainstay of Arabic music. However, none of these styles has developed counterpoint and harmony, except the Western-most offshoot (and this is truly our title to greatness and originality), with its incredible emotional impact corresponding so perfectly with the infinite and unpredictable nuances, from the fleeting shadow to the limits of exaltation or despair, or subjective experience. Again, its ability to paint the phenomena of existence, from terror to jubilation, from the waves of the sea to the steel and concrete canyons of modern metropolis, has never been equalled."

(source: **Indian and Western Music - Yehudi Menuhin** / **Hemisphere**, April 1962, p. 6.).

"Indian music has continued unperturbed through thirty centuries or more, with the even pulse of a river and with the unbroken evolution of a sequoitry."

(source: **The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde** p. 119).

Peter Yates (1909 -1976) music critic, author, teacher, and poet, was born in Toronto, had reason when he said that **"Indian music, though its theory is elaborate and its technique so difficult, is not an art, but life itself."**

(source: **The Dance of Shiva – by A K Coomaraswamy** p. 79-60).

"Despite predisposition in India's favor, I have to acknowledge that Indian music took me by surprise. I knew neither its nature nor its richness, but here, if anywhere, **I found vindication of my conviction that India was the original source."**

"Its purpose is to unite one's soul and discipline one's body, to make one sensitive to the infinite within one, to unite one's breath of space, one's vibrations with the vibrations of the cosmos."

(source: **Unfinished Journey - By Yehudi Menuhin** p. 250 - 268).

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History of Music

The beginnings of Indian music are lost in the beautiful legends of gods and goddesses who are supposed to be its authors and patrons. The goddess **Saraswati** is always represented as the goddess of art and learning, and she is usually pictured as seated on a white lotus with a vina, lute, in one hand, playing it with another, a book in the third hand and a necklace of pearls in the fourth.



The technical word for music throughout India is the word sangita, which originally included dancing and the drama as well as vocal and instrumental music. Lord Shiva is supposed to have been the creator of this three fold art and his mystic dance symbolizes the rhythmic motion of the universe.

In Hindu mythology the various departments of life and learning are usually associated with different rishis and so to one of these is traced the first instruction that men received the art of music. **Bharata** rishi is said to have taught the art to the heavenly dancers - the Apsaras - who afterwards performed before Lord Shiva. The **Rishi Narada**, **who wanders about in earth and heaven, singing and playing on his vina,** taught music to men. Among the inhabitants of Indra's heaven we find bands of musicians. The Gandharvas are the singers, the Apsaras, the dancers, and the Kinnaras performers on musical

instruments. From the name Gandharva has come the title Gandharva Veda for the art of music.

Among the **early legends of India** there are many concerning music. The following is an interesting one from the Adbuta Ramayana about **Narada rishi** which combines criticism with appreciation.

"Once upon a time the great rishi Narada thought himself that he had mastered the whole art and science of music. To curb his pride the all-knowing Vishnu took him to visit the abode of the gods. They entered a spacious building, in which were numerous men and women weeping over their broken limbs. Vishnu stopped and enquired of them the reason for their lamentation. They answered that they were the ragas and the raginis, created by Mahadeva; but that as a rishi of the name of Narada, ignorant of the true knowledge of music and unskilled in performance, had sung them recklessly, their features were distorted and their limbs broken; and that, unless Mahadeva or some other skillful person would sing them properly, there was no hope of their ever being restored to their former state of body. Narada, ashamed , kneeled down before Vishnu and asked to be forgiven."

Vedic Music

It is a matter of common knowledge to all music lovers that Indian classical music has its origin in the Sama Veda. Yet the singing of the Sama Veda has practically disappeared from India. What is heard nowadays is sasvara-patha and not sasvara-gana, that is to say, only musical recitation of the Sama Veda, not its actual singing.

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The Origins of Hindu Music

“animals tamed or wild, even children, are charmed by sound. Who can describe its marvels?” (Sang. Darp. I-31).

Under the name of **Gandharava Veda**, a general theory of sound with its metaphysics and physics appears to have been known to the ancient Hindus. From such summaries as have survived till modern times, it seems that the properties of sound, not only in different musical forms and systems but also in physics, medicine, and magic. The rise of Buddhism with its hostility towards tradition brought about a sharp deviation in the ancient approach to the arts and sciences, and their theory had often to go underground in order to avoid destruction. It was at this time that the Gandharva Veda, with all the other sacred sciences, disappeared; though the full tradition is said to survive among the mysterious sages (rishis) who dwell in Himalayan caves.

When the representatives of the old order, who had been able to maintain their tradition under ground through the centuries of persecution, arose again, their intellectual and cultural superiority was in many fields so great that Buddhism was defeated. In hardly more than a few decades, Buddhism, by the mere strength of intellectual argument, was wiped out from the whole Indian continent over which it had ruled for a thousand years. It was then (during 6th and 7th century) that an attempt was made, under the leadership of Shankaracharya, to restore Hindu culture to its ancient basis.



Megh raga.

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A number of eminent Brahmins were entrusted with the task of recovering or re-writing the fundamental treatises on the traditional sciences. For this they followed the ancient system which starts from a metaphysical theory whose principles are common to all aspects of the universe, and works out their application in a particular domain. In this way the theory of music was reconstructed. In this way the theory of music was reconstructed.

Musical theory and theory of language had been considered from the earliest times as two parallel branches of one general science of sound. Both had often been codified by the same writers. The names of **Vashishtha, Yajnavalkya, Narada, Kashyapa, Panini** are mentioned among these early musicologist-grammarians. **Nandikeshvara** was celebrated at the same time as the author of a work on the philosophy of language and of a parallel work on music. His work on language is believed to be far anterior to the Mahabhashya of Patanjali (attributed to the 2nd century B.C.) into which it is usually incorporated, though it is thought to be probably posterior to Panini, who lived no later than 6th century B.C. The chronology of works on music would seem, however, to place both Panini and Nandikeshvara at a much earlier date. The work of Nandikeshvara on the philosophy of music is now believed to be lost but fragments of it are undoubtedly incorporated in later works. At the time of the Buddhist ascendancy, when so much of the ancient lore had to be abandoned, grammatical works were considered more important than musical ones.

A part of Nandikeshvara's work on dancing, the **Abhinaya Darpana**, has been printed (Calcutta 1934) with English translation by M. Ghosh). An earlier translation by Ananda Coomaraswamy appeared under the title The Mirror of Gesture (Harvard Univ. Press. 1917).

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The Antiquity of Indian Music

The period extending from the Mahabharata war to the beginnings of Buddhism may well have been one of the greatest the culture of India has known, and its influence extended then (as indeed it still did much later) from the Mediterranean to China. Traces of its Mediterranean aspect have been found in the Cretan and Mycenean remains as well as in Egypt and the Middle East.

The Vedas, which until the beginning of this period had been transmitted orally, were then written down, and later on, the Epics and Puranas. Most of the treatises on the ancient sciences also belong to the age, though many may have been to a certain extent re-shaped later on. Ananada K. Coomaraswamy, in his book, Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon, speaks of this "early Asiatic culture and as far south as Ceylon….in the second millennium B.C.."

The ancient **Kinnari Vina** or Kin, for example, became known in China as the Khin, a stringed instrument said to have been played by the first Emperor, Fu-Hi (circa 3000 BC), The Kin is further mentioned in ancient Chinese chronicles such as the Chi Ki (2^{nd} century B.C) in reference to events of the 6^{th} or 7^{th} century. According to the Li Ki, Confucius (551-478) always had his Khin with him at home, and carried it when he went for a walk or on a journey.

In Genesis, (iv, 21 and xxxi, 27) a stringed instrument of the same kind is called Kinnor. David used to play the Kinnor as well as the nebel (flute).





Shiva, Yoga-Dakshinamurti with Rishis, Snake dancers, and Musicians - The Art Institute of Chicago.

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The antiquity of Indian theatrical art and musical theory was well known to the ancient world. According to **Strabo** (Geography X, II 17) the Greeks considered that music, "from the triple point of view of melody, rhythm and instruments" came to them originally from Thrace and Asia. "Besides, the poets, who make of the whole of Asia, including India, the land or sacred territory of Dionysos, claim that the origin of music is almost entirely Asiatic. Thus, one of them, speaking of the lyre, will say, that he causes the strings of the Asiatic cithara to vibrate." Many ancient historians spoke of Dionysos (or Bacchos) as having lived in India.

The many stories that tell how the various styles of North Indian music were invented by musicians of the Muhammadan period have probably **no basis in reality**. Under Muslim rule, age-old stories were retold as if they had happened at the court of Akbar, simply to make them more vivid, and in conformity with the fashion of the day. Such transferences of legend are frequent everywhere. In Western countries, many a pagan god in this way became a Christian saint and many ancient legends were rearranged to fit into Christian world. Some episodes in the life of the Buddha, for example, found their way into the Lives of the Saints where the Buddha appears under the name of St. Josaphat.

The impartial ear of sound-measuring instruments makes one marvel at the wonderful accuracy of the scales used by the great "Ustads" of Northern India – **scales which in everyway confirm with the requirements of ancient Hindu theory.**

To say that they pertain to, or have been influenced by, the Arab or the Persian system shows a very superficial knowledge of the subject. These systems, originally mostly derived from Indian music, have become so reduced and impoverished in comparison with it that no one can seriously speak of their having had any influence on its development. In fact the whole of the theory and most of the practice of Arab as well as Persian music is the direct descendant of the ancient Turkish music. At the beginning of the Muslim era, the Arabs themselves had hardly any musical system worth the mentioning, and all the Arabic theoreticians – Avicenna, (born about 980 A. D) Al Farabi, Safi ud'din, and others – are claimed by the Turks as Turkish in culture if not always in race. In fact, they merely expounded in Arabic the old Turkish system was well known to medieval Hindu scholars who often mention it (under the name of Turushka) as a system closely allied to Hindu music. The seventeen intervals of the octave, as used by the Arabs, are identical with seventeen of the twenty-two Indian shrutis, and there is no modal form in Arabic music which is not known to the Hindus.

(source: **Northern Indian Music - By Alain Danielou** Praeger, 1969 volume I p. 1-35).

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The Development of Scale

All music is based upon relations between sounds. These relations can, however, be worked out in different ways, giving rise to different groups of musical systems. The modal group of musical systems, to which practically the whole of Indian muisc belongs, is based on the establishment of relations between diverse successive sounds or notes on the one hand and, on the other, upon a permanent sound fixed and invariable, the "tonic".



Indian music like all modal music, thus exists only by the relations of each note with the tonic. Contrary to common belief, modal music is not merely melody without accompaniment, nor has a song or melody, in itself, anything to do with mode. The modes used in the music of the Christian Church are modes only in name, though they may have been real modes originally. But much of Scottish and Irish music, for example, is truly modal; it belongs to the same musical family as Indian music and is independent of the Western harmonic system.

Music must have been cultivated in very early ages by the Hindus; as the abridged names of the seven notes, via, **sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni**, are said to occur in the Sama Veda; and in their present order. Their names at length are as follows:

Shadja, Rishabha, Gandhara, Madhyama, Panchama, Dhaivata, Nishada.

The seven notes are placed under the protection of seven Ah'hisht'hatri Devatas, or superintenting divinities as follows:

Shadja, under the protection of **Agni**
Rishabha, of **Brahma**
Gandhara, of **Saraswati**
Madhyama, of **Mahadeva**
Panchama, of **Sri or Lakshmi**
Dhaivata, of **Ganesa**
Nishada, of **Surya**

"The note Sa is said to be the soul, Ri is called the head, Ga is the arms, Ma the chest, Pa the throat, Dha the hips, Ni the feet. Such are the seven limbs of the modal scale." (**Narada Samhita** 2, 53-54).

"Shadja is the first of all the notes and so it is the main or chief note." Datilla explains that the Shadja (the tonic) may be established at will at any pitch (on any shruti) and that, by relation with it, the other notes should be established at the proper intervals.

The Hindus divide the octave into twenty two intervals, which are called Sruti, by allocating four Sruti to represent the interval. The sruti or microtonal interval is a division of the semitone, but not necessarily an equal division. This division of the semitone is found also in ancient Greek music. It is an interesting fact that we find in Greek music the counterpart of many things in Indian music. Ancient India divided the octave into twenty two and the Greek into twenty-four. The two earliest Greek scales, the Mixolydic and the Doric show affinity with early Indian scales. The Indian scale divides the octave into twenty-two srutis.

Gramas

Indian music is traditionally based on the three gramas. First reference to Grammas or ancient scales is found in the Mahabharata and teh Harivamsa. The former speaks of the 'sweet note Gandhara', probably referring to the scale of that name. The Harivamsa speaks enthusiastically of music 'in the gramaraga which goes down to Gandhara', and ot 'the women of Bhima's race who performed, in the Gandhara gramaraga, the descent of the Ganges, so as to delight mind and ear.'

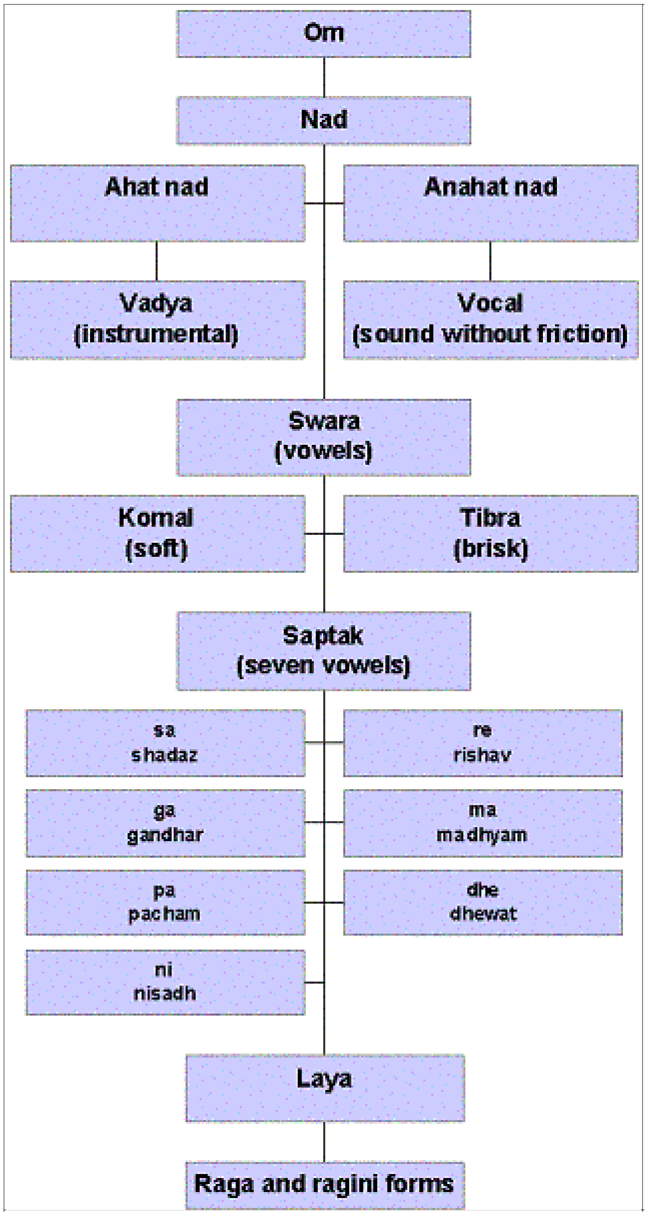
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The Nature of Sound

"Sound (Nada) is the treasure of happiness for the happy, the distraction of those who suffer, the winner of the hearts of hearers, distraction of those who suffer, the winner of the hearts of hearers, the first messenger of the God of Love. It is the clever and easily obtained beloved of passionate women. May it ever, ever, be honored. It is the fifth approach to Eternal Wisdom, the Veda."

- **Sangita Bhashya**.

Sound is said to be of two kinds, one a vibration of ether, the other a vibration of air. The vibration of ether, which remains unperceived by the physical sense, is considered the principle of all manifestation, the basis of all substance. It corresponds with what Pythagoras called the "music of the spheres" and forms permanent numerical patterns which lie at the very root of the world's existence. This kind of vibration is not due to any physical shock, as are all audible sounds. It is therefore called **anahata, "unstruck"**. The other kind of sound is an impermanent vibration of the air, an image of the ether vibration of the same frequency. It is audible, and is always produced by a shock. It is therefore called **ahata or "struck"**.



Thus, the **Sangita Makaranda** (I 4-6) says: "Sound is considered to be of two kinds, unstruck and and struck; of these two, the unstruck will be first described. "Sound produced from ether is known as 'unstruck'. In this unstruck sound the Gods delight. The Yogis, the Great Spirits, projecting their minds by an effort of the mind into this unstruck sound, depart, attaining Liberation."

"Struck sound is said to give pleasure, 'unstruck' sound gives Liberation." (**Narada Purana**).

But "this (unstruck sound) having no relation with human enjoyment does not interest ordinary men." (**Sang. Ratn** 6.7.12).

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Raga - The Basis of Melody

"I don not dwell in heaven, nor in the heart of yogis. there only I abide, O Narada, where my lovers sing." **(Narada Samhita I.7).**

"That which charms is a raga." (**Sang. Darpan** 2-1).

Each raga or mode of Indian music is a set of given sounds called notes (svara-s) forming with a permanent tonic certain ratios. To each of these ratios is said to correspond a definite idea or emotion. The complex mood created by the mixture and contrast of these different ideas or emotions is the mood or expression of the raga. The harmonious relations which exist between the notes and which can be represented by numerical ratios do not exclusively belong to music. The very same relations can be found in the harmony which binds together all the aspects of manifestation. These ratios can express the change of the seasons and that of the hours, the symphony of colors as well as that of forms. Hence the mood of a raga can be accurately represented by a picture or a poem which only creates an equivalent harmony through another medium. The expression of a raga is thus determined by its scale. It results from the expressions of each of the intervals (shrutis) which the different notes form with the tonic.

The Raga poems: Poems describing the mood of the raga are found in a number of **Sanskrit works of music.** References to them in other works seem to show that many of them were originally part of a treatise (now believed lost) by Kohala, one of the earliest writers on music.

Raga is the basis of melody in Indian music and a substitute for the western scale. **"It is the attempt of an artistic nation to reduce the law and order the melodies that come and go on the lips of the people."** In Raga Vibodha, it is defined as 'an arrangement of sounds which possesses varna, (color) funishes gratification to the senses and is constituted by musical notes." says Matanga.

Indian ragas are also supposed to be able to reproduce the conditions and emotions associated with them. The **Dipak raga** is supposed to produce flames in actuality; and a story is told of the famous musician named **Gopal Naik (Baiju Bawara)** who, when ordered to sing this by the Emperor Akbar went and stood in the Jamuna up to his neck and then started the song. The water became gradually hotter until flames burst out of his body and he was consumed to ashes. The **Megh mallar raga** is supposed to be able to produce rain. It is said that a dancing girl in Bengal, in a time of drought, once drew from the clouds with this raga a timely refreshing shower which saved the rice crop. **Sir W. Ousley,** who relates many of these anecdotes, says that he was told by Bengal people that this power of reproducing the actual conditions of the raga is now only possessed by some musicians in western India.

In connection with the sciences of raga, Indian music has developed the art of raga pictures. **Mr. Percy Brown**, formerly of the School of Art, Calcutta, defines a raga as **"a work of art in which the tune, the song, the picture, the colors, the season, the hour and the virtues are so blended together as to produce a composite production to which the West can furnish no parallel."**



Vina player from Mysore.

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It may be described as a musical movement, which is not only represented by sound, but also by a picture. **Rajah S M Tagore**, thus describes the pictorial representations of his six principal ragas. **Sriraga** is represented as a divine being wandering through a beautiful grove with his love, gathering fragrant flowers as they pass along. Near by doves sport on the grassy sward. **Vasanta raga**, or the raga of spring, is represented as a young man of golden hue, and having his ears ornamented with mango blossoms, some of which he also holds in his hands. His lotus-like eyes are rolling round and are of the color of the rising sun. He is loved by the females. **Bhairava** is shown as the great Mahadeva (Shiva) seated as a sage on a mountain top. River Ganga falls upon his matted locks. His head is adorned with the crescent moon. In the center of his forehead is the third eye from which issued the flames which reduced Kama, the Indian Cupid, to ashes. Serpents twine around his neck. He holds a trident in one hand and a drum in the other. Before him stands his sacred bull - Nandi. **Panchama raga** is pictured as a very young couple in love in a forest. **Megh raga** is the raga of the clouds, and the rainy season. It is the raga of hope and new life. The clouds hang overhead, and already some drops of rain have fallen. The animals in the fields rejoice. This raga is said to be helpful for patients suffering from tuberculosis. **Nattanarayana** is the raga of battle. A warrior king rides on a galloping steed over the field of battle, with lance and bow and shield. **Lakshmana Pillay** has said: "Thus, each raga comes and goes with its store of smiles or tears, of passion or pathos, its noble and lofty impulses, and leaves its mark on the mind of the hearer."

Sir Percy Brown read a paper on the raga which he called **Visualized Music**. He described it as a combination of two arts, music and painting. He mentioned a miniature painting which was called 'the fifth delineation of the melody **Megh Mallar Saranga**, played in four-time at the time of the spring rains. He wrote: "Todi ragini is one of the brides of Vasanta raga. The melody of this raga is so fascinating that every living creature within hearing is attracted to it. as the raga has to be performed at midday."

This art seems to have come originally from northwest India. The Indian tendency is to visualize abstract things.

The six principal ragas are the following:

1. Hindaul - It is played to produce on the mind of the bearer all the sweetness and freshness of spring; sweet as the honey of the bee and fragrant as the perfume of a thousand blossoms.

2. **Sri Raga** - The quality of this rag is to affect the mind with the calmness and silence of declining day, to tinge the thoughts with a roseate hue, as clouds are glided by the setting sun before the approach of

darkness and night.

3. **Megh Mallar** - This is descriptive of the effects of an approaching thunder-storm and rain, having the power of influencing clouds in time of drought.

4. **Deepak** - This raga is extinct. No one could sing it and live; it has consequently fallen into disuse. Its effect is to light the lamps and to cause the body of the singer to produce flames by which he dies.

5. **Bhairava** - The effect of this rag is to inspire the mind with a feeling of approaching dawn, the caroling of birds, the sweetness of the perfume and the air, the sparkling freshness of dew-dropping morn.

6. **Malkos** - The effect of this rag are to produce on the mind a feeling of gentle stimulation.

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 371).

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Tala or Time Measure

Claude Alvares has written: "The Indian system of talas, the rhythmical time-scale of Indian classical music, has been shown (by contemporary analytical methods) to **possess an extreme mathematical complexity.** The basis of the system is not conventional arithmetic, however, but more akin to what is known today as pattern recognition."

To quote **Richard Lannoy** author of **The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society**:

"In the hands of a virtuoso the talas are played at a speed so fast that the audience cannot possibly have time to count the intervals; due to the speed at which they are played, the talas are registered in the brain as a cluster configuration, a complex Gestalt involving all the senses at once. While the structure of the talas can be laboriously reduced to a mathematical sequence, the effect is subjective and emotional.....The audience at a recital of Indian classical music becomes physically engrossed by the agile patterns and counter-patterns, responding with unfailing and instinctive kinesthetic accuracy to the terminal beat in each tala."



Their ability with instruments is repeated with the voice. The extraordinary degree of control of the human voice has been described by the musicologist, Alain Danielou, who has stated that Indian musicians can produce and differentiate between minute intervals (exact to a hundreth of a comma, according to identical measurements recorded by Danielou at monthly recording sessions). This sensitivity to microtones is, from the purely musicological point of view, of little importance, like the mathematical complexity of the talas. Nevertheless, as Lannoy puts it:

"It is an indication of the care with which the "culture of sound" is developed, for Hindus still believe that such precision in the repetition of exact intervals, over and over again, permits sounds to act upon the internal personality, transform sensibility, way of thinking, state of soul, and even moral character."

(source: **Decolonizing History: Technology and Culture in India, China and the West 1492 to the Present Day - By Claude Alvares** p. 73-74).

"In other words, **the Hindu has never divorced the physical from the spiritual**; these 'ancient physiologists' ascribed an ethical significance to physiological sensitivity. The aristocratic cult of kalokagathia, 'beautiful goodness', has never been abandoned in India, even if its metaphysic bears little resemblance to the kalokagathia of the ancient Greeks.

(source: **The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society - By Richard Lannoy** p. 275).

Musical time in India, more obviously then elsewhere, is a development from the prosody and metres of poetry. The insistent demands of language

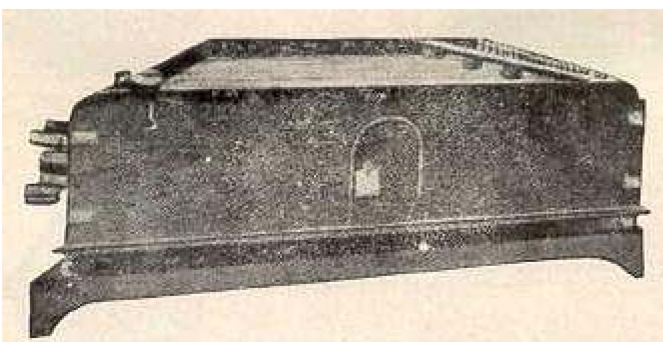
and the idiosyncrasies of highly characteristic verse haunt the music, like a 'presence which is not to be put by.' 'The time-relations of music are affected both by the structure of the language and by the method of versification which ultimately derives from it.' says one student of Indian music from the west. Until late, there was practically no prose in India and everything had to be learnt through the medium of verse chanted to regular rules. Both in Sanskrit and in the vernacular all syllables are classified according to their time-lengths, the unit of time being a matra. Very short syllables of less than a matra also occur.

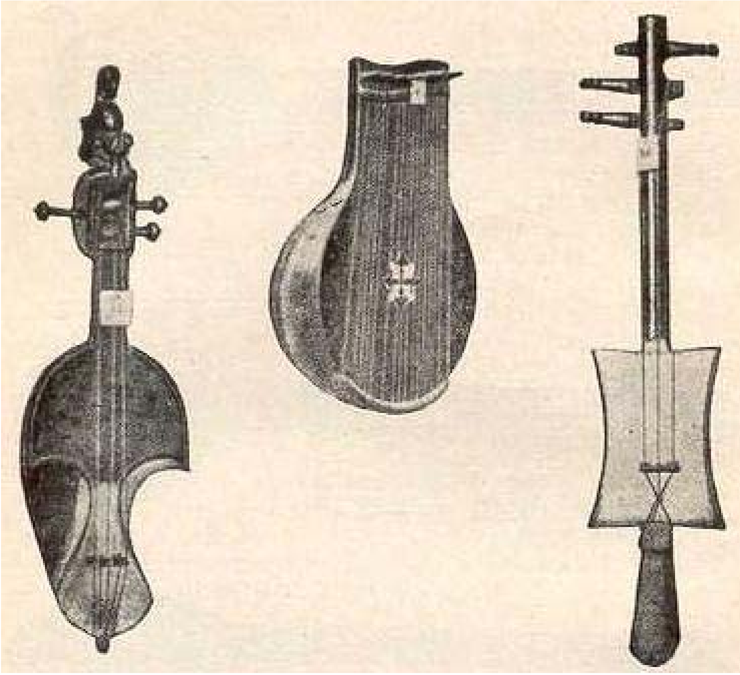
Great stress has always been laid by Indian grammarians upon giving 'the exact value' to syllables inverse; and as there is no accent at all in Indian verse the time-length is all important. **This may account for the great development of time-measures in Indian music. Rajah S M Tagore** says that the word tala refers to the beating of time by the clapping of hands. Sometimes it is also done by means of small hand-cymbals, which are called tala or kaitala or kartal (hand-cymbals).

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Musical Instruments and Sanskrit Writers on Music

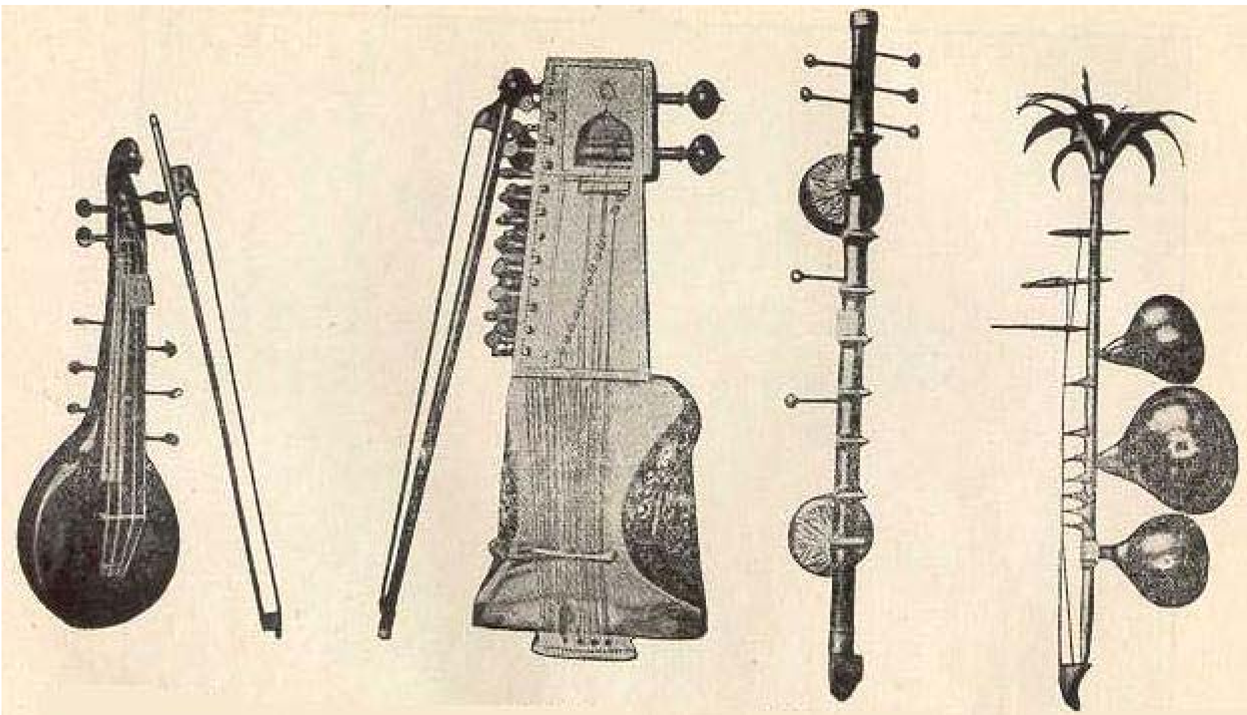
The **Vedic Index** shows a very wide variety of musical instruments in use in Vedic times. Instruments of percussion are represented by the **dundubhi**, an ordinary drum; the **adambara**, another kind of drum, **bhumidundubhi**, an earthdrum made by digging a hole in the ground covering it with hide; **vanaspati,** a wooden drum; **aghati,** a cymbal used to accompany dancing. Stringed instruments are represented by the **kanda-vina**, akind of lute; **karkari**, another lute; **vana**, a lute of 100 strings; and the **vina,** the present instrument of that name in India. **This one instrument alone is sufficient evidence of the development to which the art had attained even in those early days.** There are also a number of wind instruments of the flute variety, such as the tunava, a wooden flute; the nadi, a reed flute, bakura, whose exact shape is unknown. 'By the time of the Yajur Veda several kinds of professional musicians appear to have arisen; for lute-players, drummers, flute-players, and conch-blowers are mentioned in the list of callings.'



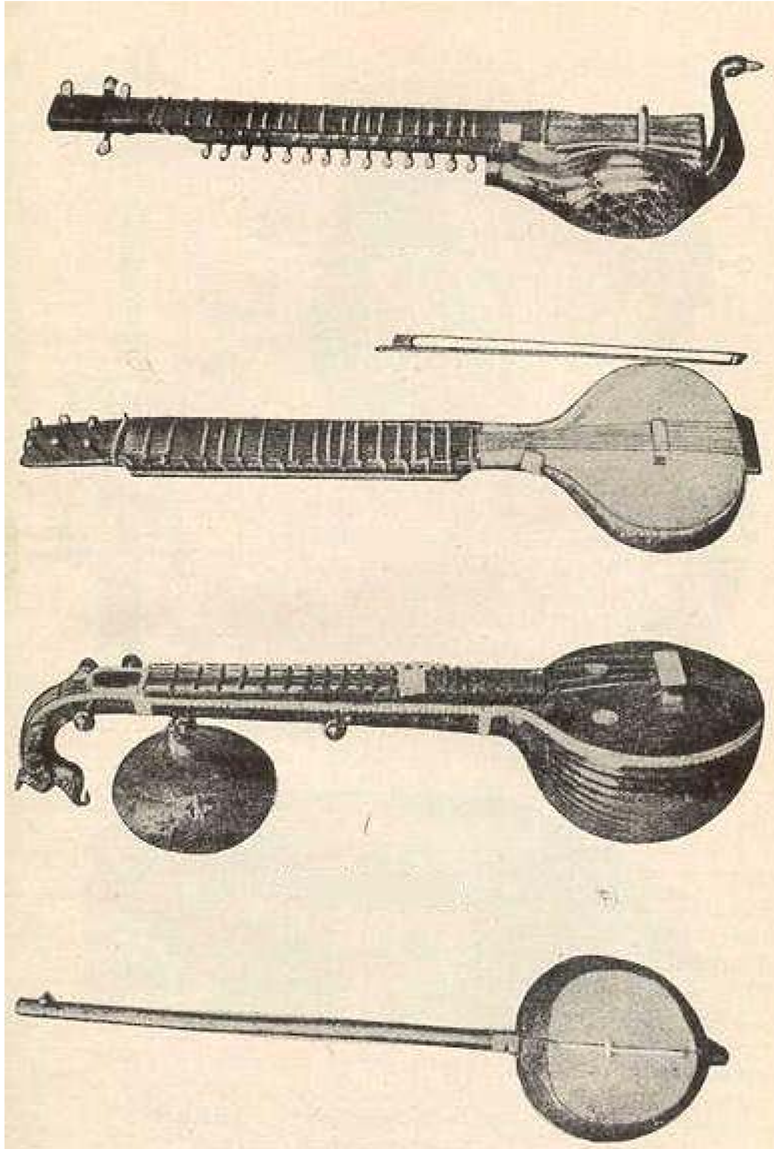


Kalyayana-vina *Sarinda*
Katyayana-vina *Chikara*

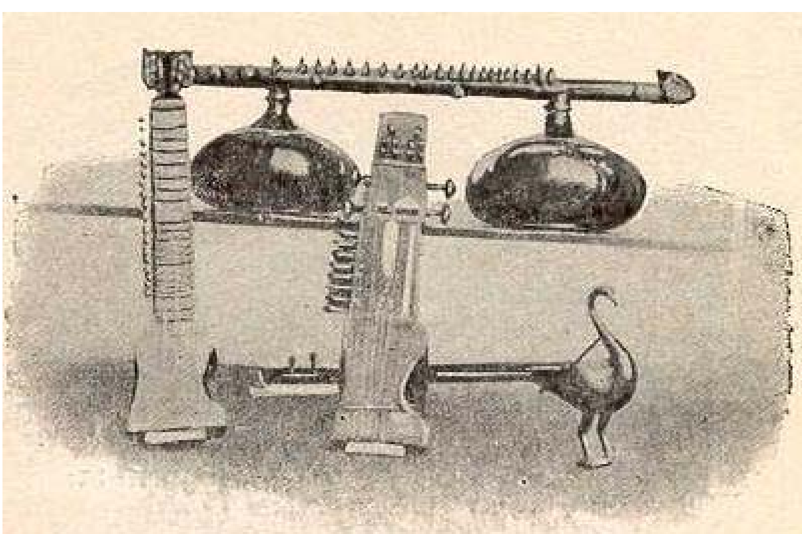
That vocal music had already got beyond the primitive stage may be concluded from the somewhat complicated method of chanting the **Sama Veda**, which goes back to the Aryan age. These hymns of the Rig Veda and Sama Veda are the earliest examples we have of words set to music. The Sama Veda, was sung according to very strict rules, and present day Samagah - temple singers of the Saman - claim that the oral tradition which they have received goes back to those ancient times. The Chandogya and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishads both mention the singing of the Sama Veda and the latter also refers to a number of musical instruments.

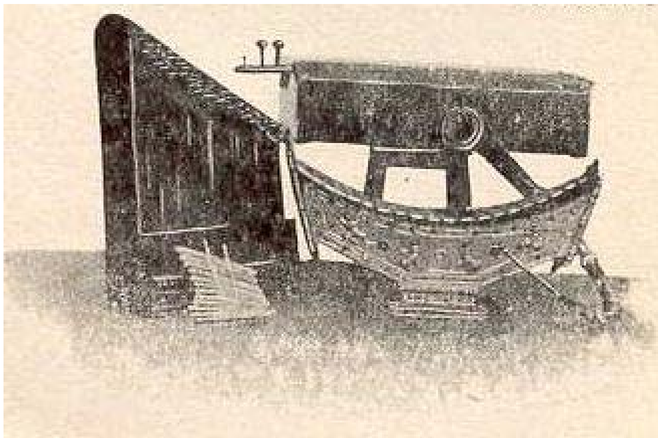


Sarangi (Bengal) *Sarangi* *Mahati Vina* *Kinnari*



Mayuri Esraj Vina (Southern) Ektar





Group of stringed instruments: Dilruba, Bin Sarangi and Peacock sitar   Some ancient instruments: Svaramandala. Brahma cina, Kural and Bastram.

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Drumming

The drum is one of the most important of Indian musical instruments. It provides the tonic to which all the other instruments must be tuned. It is a royal instrument having the right of royal honors. The drums used in India are innumerable. **Mrs. Mann** says: "The Indian drummer is a great artist. He will play a rhythm concerto all alone and play us into an ecstasy with it." "The drummer will play it in bars of 10, 13, 16, or 20 beats, with divisions within each bar flung out with a marvelous hypnotizing swing. Suggestions of such rhythm beaten out by a ragged urchin on the end of an empty kerosene oil-can first aroused me to the beauty and power of Indian music."

The Indian drummer can obtain the most fascinating rhythm from a mud pot, and some of them are great experts at this pot-drumming. The **mridanga** and **tabla** are both played in the same way, the only difference being that, in the case of the table, the two heads are on two small drums, and not on the same drum. The **Mridanga** or **Mardala** is the most common and probably the most ancient of Indian drums. It is said to be invented by Brahma to serve as an accompaniment to the dance of Shiva, in the honor of his victory over Tripurasura; and Ganesha, his son, is said to have been the first one play upon it. The word Mridanga or Mardala means 'made of clay' and probably therefore its body was originally of mud. Other drums include Pakhawaj, Nagara or Bheri or Nakkara, Dundubhi Mahanagar or Nahabet, Karadsamila, Dhol, Dhoki, Dholak and Dak. Damaru, Nidukku, or Budhudaka, Udukku, Edaka and many others.

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In the **Ramayana** mention is frequently made of the **singing of ballads**, which argues very considerable development of the art of music. The poem composed by the sage Valmiki is said to have been sung before King Dasratha. The Ramayana often makes use of musical similes. The humming of the bees reminded him of the music of stringed instruments, and the thunder of the clouds of the beating of the mridanga. He talks of the music of the battlefield, in which the twanging and creaking of the bows takes the place of stringed instruments and vocal music is supplied by the low moaning of the elephants. Ravana is made to say that "he will play upon the lute of his terrific bow with the sticks of his arrows." Ravana was a great master of music and was said to have appeased Shiva by his sublime chanting of Vedic hymns.

The **Mahabharata** speaks of seven Svaras and also of the Gandhara Grama, the ancient third mode. The theory of consonance is also alluded to.

The **Mahajanaka Jataka** (c. 200 B. C) mentions the four great sound (parama maha sabda) which are conferred as an honor by the Hindu kings on great personages. In these drums is associated with various kinds of horn, gong and cymbals. These were sounded in front of a chariot which was occupied, but behind one which was empty. The car used to go slowly round the palace and up what was called 'the kettle-drum road'. At such a time they sounded hundreds of instruments so that 'it was like the noise of the sea.' The Jataka also records how Brahmadatta presented a mountain hermit with a drum, telling him that if he beat on one side his enemies would run away and if upon the other they would become his firm

friends.



In the Tamil books **Purananuru** and **Pattupattu** (c. A.D 100-200) the drum is referred to as occupying a position of very great honor. It had a special seat called murasukattil, and a special elephant, and was treated almost as a deity. It is described as 'adorned with a garland like the rainbow.' One of the poets tells us, marveling at the mercy of the king, 'how he sat unwittingly upon the drum couch and yet was not punished.' Three kinds of drums are mentioned in these books: the battle drum, the judgment drum and the sacrificial drum. The battle drum was regarded with same the veneration that regiments used to bestow upon the regimental flag. One poem likens the beating of the drum to the sound of a mountain torrent. Another thus celebrates the virtues of the drummer.

"For my grandsire's grandsire, his grandsire's grandsire.
Beat the drum. For my father, his father did the same.
So he for me. From duties of his clan be has not swerved.
Pour forth for him one other cup of palm tree's purest wine.."

The early Tamil literature makes much mention of music. The **Paripadal** (c. A.D 100-200) gives the names of some of the svaras and mentions the fact of there being seven Palai (ancient modes). The yal is the peculiar instrument of the ancient Tamil land. No specimen of it still exists today. It was evidently something like the vina but not the same instrument, as the poet **Manikkavachakar** (c. A. D 500-700) mentions both in such a way as to indicate two different instruments. Some of its varieties are said to have had over 1,000 strings. The The **Silappadigaram** (A. D. 300), a Buddhist drama, mentions the drummer, the flute player, and the vina as well as the yal, and also has specimens of early Tamil songs. This book contains some of the earliest expositions of the Indian musical scale, giving the seven notes of the gamut and also a number of the modes and ragas in use at that time. The latter centuries of the Buddhist period were more fertile in architecture, sculpture and painting than in music. The dramas of **Kalidasa** make frequent references to music and evidently the rajahs of the time had regular musicians attached to their courts. In the **Malavikagnimitra** a song in four-time is mentioned as a great feat performed at a contest between two musicians. The development of the drama after Kalidasa meant the development of music as well, as all Indian drama is operatic. 'The temple and the stage were the great schools of Indian music.'

The oldest detailed exposition of Indian musical theory which has survived the ravages of ants and the fury of men is found in a treatise called **Natya Sastra** or the science of dancing, said to have been composed by the **sage Bharata**. There are nine chapters of the Natya Sashtra that deal with music proper. These contain a detailed exposition of the svaras, srutis, gramas, murohhansas, jatis. A translation of a portion of this chapter appeared in Mr. Clement's Introduction to Indian Music, and there is a complete French translation by Jean Grosset.

The seventh and eighth centuries of our era in South India witnessed a religious revival associated with the **bhakti movement** and connected with the theistic and popular sects of Vishnu and Shiva. This revival was spread far and wide by means of songs composed by the leaders of the movement and so resulted in a great development of musical activity among the people generally and in the spread of musical education. **Sangita Makaranda**, said to be by Narada, but not Narada Rishi as his name is mentioned in the book, was probably composed between the eighth and eleventh centuries. He gives a similar account of the Gandhara Grama to that of Sangita Ratnakara. Musical sounds are divided into five classes according to the agency of productions, as nails, wind etc. The 18 Jatis of Bharata are given and he enumerates 93 ragas.

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In Shiva’s temple, stone pillars make music - an architectural rarity

Shiva is the Destroyer and Lord of Rhythm in the Hindu trinity. But here he is Lord Nellaiyappar, the Protector of Paddy, as the name of the town itself testifies — nel meaning paddy and veli meaning fence in Tamil. Prefixed to nelveli is tiru, which signifies something special — like the exceptional role of the **Lord of Rhythm** or the unique musical stone pillars in the temple.In the **Nellaiyappar** temple, gentle taps

on the cluster of columns hewn out of a single piece of rock can produce the keynotes of Indian classical music. **"Hardly anybody knows the intricacies of how these were constructed to resonate a certain frequency. The more aesthetically inclined with some musical knowledge can bring out the rudiments of some rare ragas from these pillars."**

The Nelliyappar temple chronicle, Thirukovil Varalaaru, says the nadaththai ezhuppum kal thoongal — **stone pillars that produce music — were set in place in the 7th century during the reign of Pandyan king Nindraseer Nedumaran.** Archaeologists date the temple before 7th century and say it was built by successive rulers of the Pandyan dynasty that ruled over the southern parts of Tamil Nadu from Madurai. Tirunelveli, about 150 km south of Madurai, served as their subsidiary capital.

Each huge musical pillar carved from one piece of rock comprises a cluster of smaller columns and stands testimony to a unique understanding of the "physics and mathematics of sound." Well-known music researcher and scholar Prof. Sambamurthy Shastry, the **"marvellous musical stone pillars" are "without a parallel" in any other part of the country. "What is unique about the musical stone pillars in the Tiruelveli Nellaiyappar temple is the fact you have a cluster as large as 48 musical pillars carved from one piece of stone, a delight to both the ears and the eyes,"** The pillars at the Nellaiyappar temple are a combination of the Shruti and Laya types. **This is an architectural rarity and a sublime beauty to be cherished and preserved.**

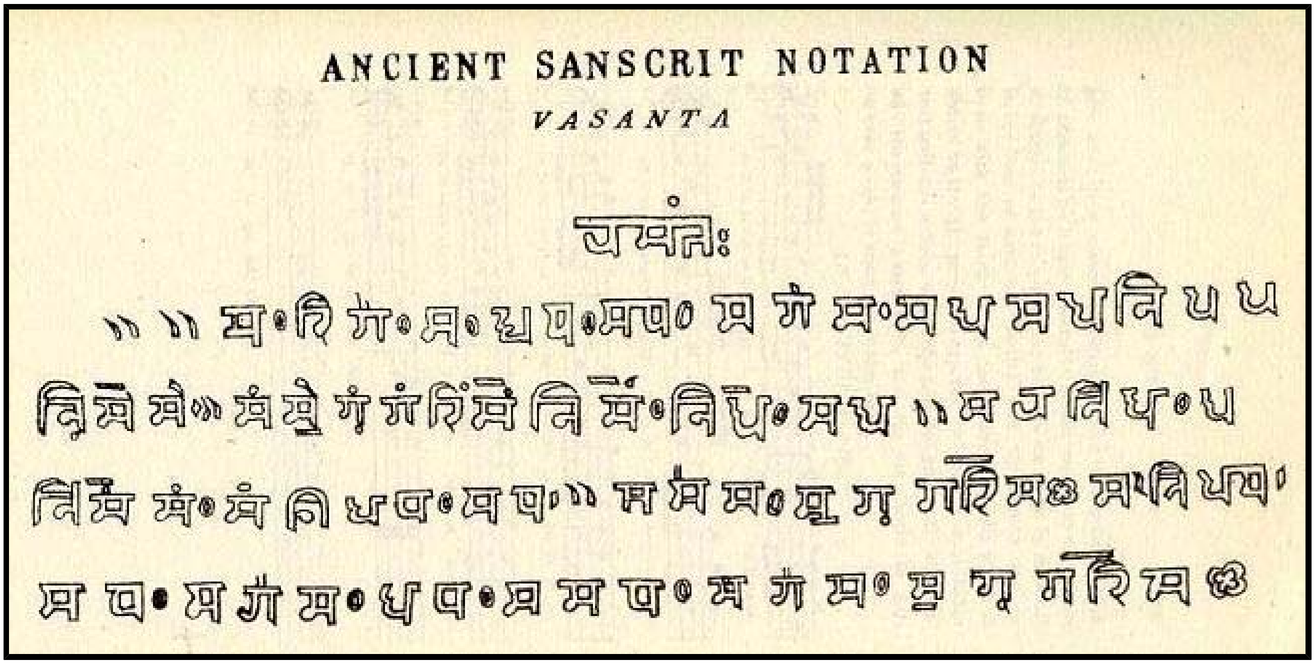
(source: **In Shiva's temple, pillars make music -** telegraphindia.com).

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Some Ancient Musical Authorities

Among important landmarks of the literature on music must also be counted portions of certain Puranas, particularly the Vishnu **Dharmottara, Markandeya Purana** and **Vayu Purana**. The Hindus claim a great antiquity for these Puranas and this seems to be corroborated by the technical terms used in reference to music. The Sanskrit authors on music can be divided into four main periods. The first period is those whose names are mentioned in the Puranans and in the Epics (Mahabharata and Ramayana), the second that of the authors mentioned in the early medieval works (Buddhistic period), the third period is that of the authors who wrote between the early medieval Hindu revival and the Muslim invasion, and the last or modern period that of Sanskrit writers under Muslim and European rule.

(Note: The Different Narada -s: There were probably three authors known by the name of Narada. One, the author of the Naradiya Shiksha. The Panchama Samhita and Narada Samhita are probably the work of the later Narada (Narada II), the author of the Sangita Makarnada.



Sanskrit authors on music can be divided into four main periods, according to Alain Danielou.

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First Period - ((The Vedic/Puranic/Epic Period)

Narada, Bharata, Nandikeshvara, Arjuna, Matanga, Kohala, Dattila, Matrigupta, and Rudrata and others.

Second Period

Abhinava Gupta, Sharadatanaya, Nanya Bhupala, Parshvadeva and Sharngadeva, and others.

Third Period

Udbhata, Lollata, Shankuka, Utpala Deva, Nrisimha Gupta, Bhoja King, Simhana, Abhaya Deva, Mammata, Rudrasena, Someshvara II, Lochana Kavi (Raga Tarangini), Sharngadeva (Sangita Ratnakara), Jayasimha, Ganapati, Jayasena, Hammira, Gopala Nayak and others.

Fourth Period

Harinayaka, Meshakarna, Madanapala Deva, Ramamatya (Svara-mela Kalanidhi), Somanatha (Raga Vibodha), Damodhara Mishra (Sangita Darpana), Pundarika Vitthala (Shadraga Chandrodya, Raga Mala, Raga Manjari), Somanatha, Govinda Dikshita, Basava Raja, and others.

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The first North Indian musician whom we can definitely locate both in time and place is **Jayadeva**, who lived at the end of the 12th century. He was born at Kendula near Bolpur, where lived Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, laureate of Bengal and modern India. Jayadeve wrote and sang the **Gita Govinda**, a series of songs descriptive of the love of Krishna, and the bhakti movement. The Gita Govinda was translated by Sir Edwin Arnold under the name of The Indian Song of Songs. In these songs Radha pours forth her yearning, her sorrow and her joy and Krishna assures her of his love.

Sarangadeva - (1210- 1247 A D) one of the greatest of ancient Indian musical authorities and one who still inspires reverence in the minds of India's musicians. He lived at the court of the Yadava dynasty of Devagiri in the Deccan. at that time the Maratha Empire extended to the river Kaveri in the south, and it is probable that Sarngadeva had come into contact with the music of the south as well as the north. His work, the Sangita Ratnakara shows many signs of this contact. It is possible that he was endeavoring to give the common theory which underlies both systems.



Nayak Baiju, popularly known as Baijubawra

Gopala Nayaka or Bijubawara (1295-1315) a musician from the court of Vijayanagar.

The 14th and 15th centuries are the most important in the development of the northern school. It was the time of the Muhammed conquest. Many of the emperors did a great deal to extend the practice of music of the earlier Hindu rajahs, and most of them had musicians attached their courts. Amir Khusru was a famous singer at the court of Sultan Alla-ud-din (A D 1295-1316). He was not only a poet and musician, but also a soldier and statesman. There is a story told of a contest between Amir Khusru and Gopal Naik, a musician from the court of Vijayanagar. While Gopal was singing a beautiful composition, Khusru hid under the throne of the king and afterwards imitated all the beauties of Gopal's melodies. Muhammadan historians relate that, when the Moghuls, completed the conquest of the Deccan, they took back with them to the north many of the most famous southern musicians, in the same way that they took toll of the Indian architects and sculptors for their new buildings.

Bharata, Iswara, Parana and Narada were among the great Hindu musicians of ancient India. In more recent times, however, Naik Gopal and Tansen have been the most celebrated ones. About Naik Gopal, **Arthur Whitten** says: "Of the magical effect produced by the singing of Gopal Naik and of the romantic termination to the career of the sage, it is said that he was commanded by Akbar to sing the raga deepak, and he, obliged to obey, repaired to the river Jumna, in which he plunged up to his neck. As he warbled the wild and magincal notes, flames burst from his body and consumed him to ashes." He adds: "It is recorded of Tansen that he was also commanded by the Emperor Akbar to sing the sri, or night raga, at midday, and the power of the music was such that it instantly became night, and the darkness extended in a circle around the palace as far as his voice could be heard." India, it seems, produced Orpheuses even so late as the 17th century A.D.

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 373-374).

Dr. Tennet says: "If we are to judge merely from the number of instruments and the frequency with which they apply them, the Hindus might be regarded as considerable proficients in music."

(source: **Music of the Ancients - By Arthur Whitten** p. 21).

Lochana Kavi - The Ragatarangini, was composed by Lochana Kavi and probably belongs to this period. The major portion of this work is devoted to the discussion of a number of songs by a poet named Vidyapati, who flourished in the 15th century at the court of the Raja Siva Singh of Tirhut. The author also describes the current musical theories of the day, and groups the ragas under twelve thats or fundamental modes.

Chaitanya (A.D. 1485-1533) - The development of the bhakti revival in Northern India and Bengal under Chaitanya was accompanied by a great deal of musical activity, and it was at this time that the popular musical performances, known as Sankirtan and Nagarkirtan were first started.

Swami Haridas - was a great Hindu saint and musician who lived on the banks of Brindaban, the center of the Lord Krishna on the banks of the Jamuna in the reign of Akbar. He was considered the greatest musician of his time. **Tan Sen**, a Gaudhiya brahmin and the celebrated singer of Akbar's court, was one of his pupils. Many tales are told about Tan Sen and Haridas. One of these tells how the Emperor after one of his performances asked him if there was anyone in the world who could sing like him. Tan Sen replied that there was one who far surpassed him. At once the Emperor was all anxious to hear this other singer and when told that he would not even obey the command of the Emperor to come to court, he asked to be taken to him. It was necessary for the Emperor to go in disguise as the humble instrument carrier to his singer. They came to the hermitage of Haridas Swami on the banks of the Jamuna, and Tan Sen asked him to sing but he refused. Then Tan Sen practized a little trick and himself sang a

piece before his old master, making a slight mistake in doing so. The master at once called his attention to it and showed him how to sing it properly, and then went on in a wonderful burst of song, while the Emperor listened enraptured. Afterwards, as they were going back to the palace, the Emperor said to Tan Sen, "Why cannot you sing like that?" "I have to sing whenever my Emperor commands." said Tan Sen, "but he only sings in obedience to the inner voice."

Akbar and Tansen visiting Swami Haridas, Kishangarh, second half of the 18th century (courtesy: National Museum, New Delhi).

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Raja Man Singh of Gwalior, one of the greatest of Akbar's ministers, was also a great patron of music and is have said to have introduced the Dhrupad style of singing. The Gwalior court has maintained its high musical traditions to the present day.

Mirabai - The heroic Mirabai (c. 1500) wife of a prince of the Udaipur clan and famous poetess and musician, and **Tulsi Das** (1584), the singer and composer of the Hindi Ramayana, are representatives of musical culture in North India.

Pundarika Vitthal - another musician during Akbar's reign. He lived at Burhanpur in Khandhesh and may have been asked to go to Delhi when Akbar took over Khandhesh in 1599. Pundarika wrote four works: Shadragachandrodaya, Ragamala, Ragamanjari, and Nartananirnaya: these have been recently discovered in the State Library of Bikanir.

During the reign of Aurangzeb music went out of favor in the royal court. A story is told of how the court musicians, desiring to draw the Emperor's attention to their distressful condition, came past his balcony carrying a gaily dressed corpse upon a bier and chanting mournful funeral songs. Upon the Emperor enquiring what the matter was, they told him that **music had died from neglect** and that they were taking its corpse to the burial ground. He replied at once, "Very well, make the grave deep, so that neither voice nor echo may issue from it."

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Raga and Jazz

The **raga** is the core of the Indian classical music system. **The Raga Guide** begins by attempting to explain what has always been elusive. As to the question, "What is a raga?," it says, "Virtually every writer on Indian music has struggled with this fundamental question." The guide ventures, "A raga can be regarded as a tonal framework for composition and improvisation; a dynamic musical entity with a unique form, embodying a unique musical idea." A raga is not merely a scale (as in Western music), or a tune or song. A raga is built upon a scale and contains a tune, but it encompasses and implies much more.

Indian music has always placed emphasis on vocal expression over instrumental. The best instrumental is thought to be that which renders most faithfully the subtleties of the human voice. Jazz is often also conceived of vocally, even purely instrumental jazz. **Indian classical music is melodical, whereas Western music is harmonical.** Music of the world began as a melodic stream, which later branched out into harmonics. Although Indian musicians knew the principles of harmony, they chose to develop their systems along the lines of melody: one-line, or one dimensional, "horizontal" music, which lends itself to meditative individual expression. Here we find a similarity to jazz which gives a license for long solo improvisation.

Because Indian music is modal, it knows no change of keys but sticks to one steady ground note. Very important to Indian music are embellishments, tone colors, and intervals that do not exist in well-tempered Western music which allows expression only through improvisation. Jazz is also modal and it does not limit itself to the tones of Western tuning. In theory Indian octaves consist of 66 microtones, but in practice there are 22 tones per octave, which is nearly twice the number found in the Western octave. In many freestyle jazz improvisations, one can also find the use of this many tones.

The French ethnomusicologist **Alain Danielou**, one of the West's top experts in the field of Indian music, once said: "Two basic traits are characteristic of music in India. For one thing, in all its various forms its basic concept is vocal; for another thing, Indian music is modal music in the true sense; it knows no change of keys, that is, it sticks to one steady, unvarying ground tone...A crucial role is played by embellishments, tone colors, and above all, by intervals that do not exist in Western well-tempered music. A music created from this vantage point...can find its musical expression only in improvisation."

Danielou's statements show immediately how **many similarities exist between jazz and Indian music**. Jazz, too is vocally conceived, even in its instrumental forms. Nor does jazz limit itself to the tone reservoir of Western tempered tuning. Jazz musicians - singers and instrumentalists alike have never limited themselves to the well-tempered scales. Theoretically, the Indian octave consists of 66 shrutis (microtones); in musical praxis there are 22 tones per octave, almost twice the number in the Western octave! Jazz and fusion guitarist Larry Coryell was completely right when he said, "I hear a lot of blues in Indian music."

The rhythmic possibilities of India's music have been attractive to jazz musicians. **Trumpeter Don Ellis** (1934-1978) was one of the first to emphasize the similarities between jazz and Indian music. In Jazz he wrote," Jazz musicians like to think of themselves as masters of rhythm (and in comparison to European music they are in the forefront) but.....how crude and primitive the conventional jazz musician's grasp of rhythm is **in comparison with Indian music...And jazz musicians who desires to really acquire a grasp of rhythm should, if at all possible, study Indian music."**

It was also Don Ellis who pointed out that Indian music is played with a different - non-Western - concept of time. The mysteries of Indian music - its talas, its rhythmic sequences - incomprehensible for Western listeners - can be as long as 108 beats. Tala: the word combines the two syllables ta (from tandava, Shiva's cosmic dance) and la (from Lasya, the name of Shiva's dance partner), implying cosmic musical union. Ragas are not keys in the Western sense, although ragas combine all those things that in Western music break down into theme, key, tuning, phrasing, form, and even

composition. **The ancient Sanskrit sages gave the following definition: Ranjayati iti ragah ("that which colors the spirit is a raga").** According to Ravi Shankar, a raga is "discovered as a zoologist may discover a new animal species or as a geographer may discover a new island. " In other words, a raga - each raga exists from the beginning; it is a musical archetype. In theory the number of raga is unlimited. In South India alone, there are 5,831 ragas known by their individual titles. Even an average musician is expected to have mastered at least seventy to eighty ragas.

A composition or melody in classical Indian music is called a raga or in the feminine, ragini. Raga means that which gives pleasure. Ragas and ragini are formed by the combination of the seven basic notes on the scale: SA, RE, GA, MA, PA, Dha, and NI. Each raga and ragini is considered to be a person. **The rishis perceived that behind everything is personality; consciousness has personality.** The ragas are also associated with a particular time of day and often to a particular season. Within the guidelines of the raga system, musicians uniquely express themselves. In India over the centuries, there evolved almost 6,000 different ragas. The system is an extremely flexible one, as is jazz among the rest of Western music.

Ragas combine everything that Western music breaks down into them, key tuning, phrasing, form, and even composition. But they are not thought of as compositions by their would-be musical composers. According to **Pandit Ravi Shankar**, a raga is "discovered as a zoologist may discover a new animal species, or a geographer may discover a new island. They are better understood as musical archetypes. Raga is accompanied by rhythmic time cycles. These time cycles are known as matra and can be as long as 108 beats. Although the Western ear is lost, the trained ear is following with a subtle excitement the longer consequences, waiting for the rhythmist to complete the cycle and meet with the other

Indian music is played with a much different conception of time than Western music. Sometimes one piece an last an entire night.

Joachim-Ernst Berendt (1922-2000) author of **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound** (Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180) and **The Jazz Book**. In the later book, he has demonstrated that "a non-Western concept of time plays a decisive role in jazz." According to Berendt, "Jazz is played with two different concepts of time, one Western and one non-Western."

There were many musicians who became caught up in the mystery of Indian music, and of course the beat '50s poets as well, but of all of them, John Coltrane played the highest note. Coltrane is perhaps the best example of how India's spiritual vibration affected jazz musicians spirituality. Coltrane's life was deeply moved by Indian spiritual thought, as were those with whom he played. His albums, beginning as early as 1961 with **India**, followed by **Meditation: A Love Supreme**, and **Om**, are examples of his influence on his music.

John Coltrane (1926-1967) Pioneering American jazz artist.

Non-European religion especially Hinduism long recognized in music a potential for the ecstatic spiritual experience. During the seven year period from 1957 to 1964, Coltrane began to become interested in nonwestern music and philosophy. He explored West African music as well as the music of India and began to read books about Hinduism. "Resolution" begins with Coltrane's introduction of the theme, followed by a series of variations that develop in a manner that has more in common with the Indian raga than with the traditional jazz solo development.

As he explored world religions, Coltrane so also explored world music. In 1961 he began listening closely to Indian music, especially the sitarist Ravi Shankar. Coltrane’s interest in scales and modes from India and elsewhere was part of his broader mission to discover the universalities in music. Coltrane recorded a track titled "India". "India" is characterized by a musical chant that never moves from the G pedal point, much like the North Indian music he was listening to at the time. Jazz scholars have found that the probable source of the tune is a recorded Vedic chant that seems to have been issued around that time. The melody of the singer on the recording is nearly identical to that of Coltrane.

Well-known practitioners and dabblers in aspects of Hinduism have included **Alice Coltrane, Mahavishnu**

John McLaughlin, Narada Michel Walden, Carlos "Devadip" Santana, Charles Mingus, The Beatles, Boy George, Madonna and **Sting.**

The popular Hare Krishna mantra was heard for months over the radio within ex-Beatle **George Harrison's** number one single, "**My Sweet Lord.**"

(source: **Ancient Wisdom For Modern Ignorance - By Swami B. V. Tripurari** p.).

In reference to music, spirituality is Nada Brahma. Tenor saxophonist Nathan Davis said: "What we really mean by saying spirituality is religiousness." **James Baldwin** wrote that anyone who really wants to become a moral humane being must first of all "free himself from the taboos, the misdeeds and the hypocrisy of the Christian Church..The concept of God is valid and useful only if it can make us greater, freer and more capable of love."

John Coltrane's musical development was driven forward, motivated, supplemented, enlarged, and enriched by its interaction with his spirituality. He said: "My goal in meditating through music remains the same."

John McLaughlin, when asked for the beginning of his musical interest in India, first speaks of spiritual things and then of musical matters: **"I opened myself to Indian music, because I felt a tie with Indian culture."**

For many jazz musicians and for the new species of "world musician" in general, Indian music is a memory of what music should actually be and what it was in the beginning.

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p 201-226).

Warren Senders - The leader of the indo-jazz ensemble **Anti-Gravity**, and a member of the New England Conservatory faculty. He who lives in Boston and has learnt Hindustani classical music for the last 27 years. His gurus include the legendary **Bhimsen Joshi.**

Recently Warren performed at the Nehru Centre. Wearing a grey embroidered pyjama kurta, with a Himachali cap on his head, and rimless glasses perched on his nose, he sat cross legged on the stage, and **launched into a masterful rendering of Madhuvanti raag, followed by Gaud Malhar and a folk dhun in Pahari. It was strange to see a foreigner so immersed in the delineation of a raag,** displaying the same facial movements and body contortions typical of Indian classical singers. His tayyari was great, and it was undoubtedly the result of long and painstaking **saadhana.**

(source: **We must know our roots - By Pavan K Varma** - hindustantimes.com).

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Colonialist thinking of Indian music

A brief look at the position of the musical cultures of Asia in the history of music - primarily the cultures of India. Indian music is classical, and it is a sign of "colonialist" thinking when they are referred to as "folklore." One often hears such nonsense when Indian music is performed; someone will say that Hariprasad Chaurasia, for instance, the master of the "divine flute," plays "Indian folklore," In a way, that is the same as calling a Mozart divertimento "Salzburg folklore," or a Verdi opera "Milanese folklore," or a Gershwin song "American folklore."

To call classical Indian music "folklore" is a sign of arrogance, making it sound as if classical music existed only in the European tradition, while all other traditions have folk music.

Many of the great musical cultures outside of Europe and North America not only are of equal rank with Western music, but surpass it in certain fields. In terms of rhythm, for example, the music of Africa and that of India are far richer than almost anything brought forth in the West. Consider the talas, the rhythmic series of Indian music. Even long talas of fifteen or nineteen beats, structured in the most complex way, can be followed beat for beat not only by the musicians but also by many listeners in India. Western audiences, however, become unsure as soon as they are faced with rhythms more complex than simple

three-quarter or four-four time, and Western musicians become uncertain about meters of more than five or seven beats.

The music of India is richer in tonality than the music of the West, because it uses microtones. Its tone repertoire is almost twice as large as that of our music. The ears of music lovers in India have not yet been spoiled by our "well-tempered" scale.

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p157-158).

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Views about Hindu Music

Music has been a cultivated art in India for at least three thousand years. The chant is an essential element of Vedic ritual; and the references in later Vedic literature, the scriptures of Buddhism, and the Hindu epics show that it was already highly developed as a secular art in centuries preceding the beginning of the Christian era. Its zenith may perhaps be assigned to the Imperial Age of the Guptas - from the fourth to the sixth century A.D. This was the classical period of Sanskrit literature culminating in the drama of Kalidasa; and to the same time is assigned the monumental treatise of Bharata on the theory of music and drama. The cosmological aspect in Indian music, unlike that in Western counterpart, is of great importance. Indian ragas are to be played at specified times, such as in the morning or evening, or during spring or autumn etc.

There is much that is common to both the Hindu and European systems. Arthur Witten writes: "Their (Hindus) scale undoubtedly resembles our diatonic mode, and consists of seven sounds, which are extended to three octaves, that being the compass of the human voice. Their voices and music, like ours, are divided into three distinct classes. The bass, called odarah, or lowest notes; the tenor, called madurrah, or middle notes; the soprano, called the tarrah, or upper notes. The similarity of the formation of the ancient Hindu scale to our modern system is noteworthy. We name the sounds of our scales: Doh, Ray, Me, Fah, Sol, La, Te. That common in India is: Sa, Ray, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ne. The reason of this similarity is evident.

Amir Khusrow (1234-1325) poet, historian, and musician, who called himself a "Hindu Turk" was passionately involved with Indian music. He wrote:

"Indian music, the fire that burns heart and soul, is superior to the music of any other country."

(source: **Hinduism and Secularism: After Ayodhya - edited by Arvind Sharma** p. 185).

Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840 -1900) says:

"A regular system of notation was worked out before the age of Panini, and seven notes were designated by their initial letters. This notation passed from the Brahmins through the Persians to Arabia, and was thence introduced into European music by Guido d'Arezzo at the beginning of the eleventh century."

According to **Albrecht Weber** (1825 -1901) "According to **Von Bohlen** and **Benfrey**, this notation passed from the Hindus to the Persians," and from these again to the Arabs, and was introduced into European music by **Guido D'Arezzo** at the beginning of the 11th century."

Strabo, the Greek historian wrote: "Some of the Greeks attribute to that country (India) the invention of nearly all the science of music. We perceive them sometimes describing the cittiara of the Asiatics and sometime applying to flutes the epithet Phrygian. the names of certain instruments, such as nabla and others, likewise are taken from barbarous tongues."

Colonel James Tod says: "This nabla of Starbo is possible the tabla, the small tabor of India. If Strabo took his orthography from the Persian or Arabic, a single point would constitute the difference between the N (nun) and the T (te).

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 371- 373).

Sir William Jones foremost Oriental scholar, who went to India in 1794, wrote **On the Musical Modes of the Hindus**, say:

"The Hindu system of music has, I believe, been **formed on truer principles than our own**; and all the skill of the native composers is directed to the great object of their art, the natural expression of strong passions, to which melody, indeed, is often sacrificed, though some of their tunes are pleasing even to an European ear."

"As to the notation, since every Indian consonant includes, by its nature, the short vowel a, five of the sounds are denoted by single consonants, and the two others have different short vowels, taken from their full names; by substituting long vowels, the time of each note is doubled, and other marks are used for a further elongation of them. The octaves above and below the mean scale, the connexion and accerration of notes, the graces of execution, or manner of finger in the instrument, expressed very clearly by small circles and eclipses, by little chains, by curves.

Ragini Todi, Malwa, late 17th century A.D. Legend has it that wild deer would come from the forest enchanted by the sound of the vina.

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H T Coleman writes, "An account of the state of musical science amongst the Hindus of early ages and a comparison between it and that of Europe is yet a desideratum in Oriental literature. From what we already know of the science, it appears to have attained a theoretical precision yet unknown to Europe, and that too in a period when even Greece was little removed from barbarism."

Coleman has written in his book, Hindu Mythology: "Of the Hindu system of music the excellent writer

whom I have before mentioned (Sir William Jones), has expressed his belief that it has been formed on better principles than our own."

(source: **Hindu Mythology - By H. T. Coleman** preface. p. ix).

Lady Anne Campbell Wilson author of **After five years in India, or, Life and work in a Punjaub district**, says: "An eminently poetical people," as the ancient Hindus were, could not but have been eminently musical also. "The people of India are essentially a musical race.....To such an extent is music an accompaniment of existence in India, that every hour of the day and season of the year has its own melody."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 366).

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) the late curator of Indian art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and author of **The Dance of Shiva: Essays on Indian Art and Culture,** has written:

"Music has been a cultivated art in India for at least three thousand years. The chant is an essential element of Vedic ritual; and the references in later Vedic literature, the epics, the scriptures of Buddhism, show that it was already highly developed as a secular art in centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. Its zenith may perhaps be assigned to the Imperial age of the Guptas - from the 4th to the 6th century A.D. This was the classic period of Sanskrit literature, culminating in the drama of Kalidasa; and to the same time is assigned the monumental treatise on the theory of music and drama."

"..it reflects emotions and experiences which are deeper, wider and older than the emotion or wisdom of any single individual. Its sorrow is without tears, its joy without exultation and it is passionate without any loss of serenity. It is in the deepest sense of the words all-human."

(source: **The Wisdom of Ananda Coomaraswamy - presented by S. Durai Raja Singam** 1979 p. 84 and **The Dance of Shiva - By Ananda Coomaraswamy** p. 94).

J. T. Coker

"Music has been a cultivated art in India for at least three thousand years. It flows from the essential element of chant in ancient Vedic religious expression. More than any other musical form, the Indian *raga* tradition structurally and acoustically corresponds to and embodies the spiritual/religious experience. It offers a direct experience of the consciousness of the ancient world, with a range of expression rarely accessible today. All Indian instruments are played as extensions of the ultimate, because most natural, instrument -- the human voice -- that chants the sacred poems, mantras, and invocations of the gods. "

"The European musical scale has been reduced to twelve fixed notes by merging close intervals such as D sharp and E flat -- a compromise of necessity in the development of the mathematical harmony that made possible the triumphs of Western orchestration, causing the Western keyboard, unlike instruments from other musical cultures, to be inherently "out of tune. **"We can hear in Indian music the richest correlation of sound with the origins and manifestations of spiritual consciousness.** The idea of nonmanifest sound -- the essence in the interval between notes -- is akin to the New Testament conception of the Word, and underlies and pervades the music. It lies beneath all that is manifest in nature, cosmic and microcosmic, and realizes itself as the multiplicities and differentiations of existence."

(source: **A Handful of Beauty: Music as a Vehicle of Spirit - by J. T. Coker Sunrise magazine, February/March 1991 Theosophical University Press**).

Music in India has a history of at least three thousand years. The Vedic hymns, like all Hindu poetry, were written to be snug; poetry and song, music and dance, were made one art in the ancient ritual. Sangita, the Indian tradition of music, is as old as Indian contacts with the Western world, and it has graduated through various strata of evolution: primitive, prehistoric, Vedic, classical, mediaeval, and modern. It has traveled from temples and courts to modern festivals and retaining a clearly recognizable continuity of tradition.

German author **Albrecht Weber** writes in his book **The history of Indian literature** (p. 27):

"The Hindus scale - Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Nee has been borrowed by the Persians, where we find it in the form of do, re, ma, fa, so, le, ci. It came to the West and was introduced by **Guido d' Arezzo** in Europe in the form of do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti....even the 'gamma' of of Guido (French gramma, English gamut) goes back to the Sanskrit grammar and Prakrit gamma and is thus a direct testimony of the Indian origin of our European scale of seven notes."

More information on how the Indian system of music traveled to Europe is provided by **Ethel Rosenthal's** research in her book, **The Story of Indian Music** and its Instruments, on page 3, in which she observes, "In **The Indian Empire,** **Sir William Wilson Hunter** (1840-1900) remarked that:

"A regular system of notation had been worked out before the age of Panini and the seven notes were designated by their initial letters. **This notation passed from the Brahmins through the Persians to Arabia, and was then introduced into European music by Guido d' Arezzo at the beginning of the 11th century...**..Hindu music after a period of excessive elaboration, sank under the Muhammadans into a state of arrested developments......."

Relief from Sharahat (2nd century B. C) arched harps and drums Relief from Gandhara (c.100 A.D. with lute).

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Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900) further observes, "Not content with the tones and semi-tones, the Indian musicians employed a more minute sub-division, together with a number of sonal modifications which the Western ear neither recognizes or enjoys. Thus, they divide the octave into 22 sub-tones instead of 12 semi-tones of the European scales. The Indian musician declines altogether to be judged by the new simple Hindu airs which the English ear can appreciate."

The two phenomena, which have already been stated as the foundation of musical modes, could not long have escaped the attention of the Hindus, and their flexible language readily supplied them with names for the seven Swaras, or sounds, which they dispose in the following order: Shadja, pronounced Sharja, Rishabha, Gandhara, Madhyama, Pachama, Dhaivata, Nishada, but the first of them is emphatically named Swara, or the sound, from the important office, which it bears in the scale; and hence, by taking the seven initial letters or syllables of those words, they contrived a notation for their airs and at the same time exhibited a gamut, at least as convenient as that of Guido: they call it Swaragrama or Septaca, and express it in this form:

Sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni,

three of which syllables are, by a singular concurrence exactly the same, though not all in the same places, with three of those invented by David Mostare, as a substitute for the troublesome gamut used in his time, which he arranges thus: Bo, ce, di, ga, lo, ma, ni.

(source: **The Story of Indian Music - By Ethel Rosenthal** p. 3 and 177-178).

Regarding the growth and development of music in India, **Yehudi Menuhin** (1916 -1999) the well known violinist who visited India (1952) writes in an American literary magazine The Saturday Review of Literature that he found:

"there was so much new and satisfying to him that in India the equilibrium of life is better balanced than elsewhere, a greater unity of thought and feeling prevail than in the West." In his view Indian music, culture and philosophy "are quite sufficient, soundly conceived and adequate for the needs not only of Indian but capable of being beneficial if adopted in a wider sphere of humanity. Indian music is a traditional crystallized form of expression in which the performers and auditors partake of the resignation of environment and fact. It invites to attain a sense of meditation, of oneness with God."

(source: **Ancient Indian Culture At A Glance - By Swami Tattwananda** p. 147-148).

The **Sakuntala** furor has lasted till almost today. One of the noblest "overtures" in European music is the **Sakuntala overture** of the Hungarian composer **Carl Goldmark** (1830-1915).

(source: **Creative India - By Benoy Kumar Shenoy** p. 110).

The Hindus first developed the science of music from the chanting of the Vedic hymns. The Sama Veda was especially meant for music. And the scale with seven notes and three octaves was known in India centuries before the Greeks had it. Probably the Greeks learnt it from the Hindus. It is interesting to know that German composer, **Richard Wagner** was indebted to the Hindu science of music, especially for his principal idea of the "leading motive"; and this is perhaps the reason why it is so difficult for many Western people to understand Wagner's music. He became familiar with Eastern music through Latin translations, and his conversation on this subject with **Arthur Schopenhauer**. (please refer to **Quotes1-20** page for more on Schopenhauer).

(source: **India And Her People - By Swami Abhedananda** - p.221).

William Smythe Babcock Mathews (1837-1912) author of **Popular History of the Art of Music**

"**Hindoos carried the theory of music to an extremely fine point,** having many curious scales, some of them with 24 divisions in an octave. However 22 was the usual number. **The pitch of each note in every mode was accurately calculated mathematically** and the frets of the VeeNaa located thereby, according to very old theoretical work by one with name Soma, written in Sanskrit as early as 1500 BC."

(source: **Popular History of the Art of Music - By W. S .B. Mathews** Publisher: Clayton F. Summy Date of Publication: 1906).

As **M. Bourgault Ducondray** (1840-1910) writes: "The Hindu music will provide Western musicians with fresh resources of expression and with colors hitherto unknown to the palate of the musicians." It seems **Richard Wagner** got the idea of leading motive from India through Latin translations. The Gregorain mode in Western music introduced by Pope Gregory, the Great, are of Indian inspiration, which he got when he was ambassador at Constantinople. Indian music has ardent admirers in the West. Romain Rolland told Dilip Kumar Roy that by his capacity for continuous improvisation, the executants in Indian music was always a creator, while in European music he was only an interpreter. **George Duhamel**, (1844-1966) the eminent French author and critic, told Roy that Indian music was "indeed a novel but delightful experience with me. **The music of India is without doubt one of the greatest proofs of the superiority of her civilization."**

Leopold Stotowski, Yehudi Meuhudin and others have spoken in glowing words of the subtle intricacies of Indian rhythm from which the West has much to learn. Ravi Shanker has held

spell-bound many a Western audience, by playing on his Sitar.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavarta R. Patel** p. 45-48).

Count Hermann Keyserling (1880-1946) philosopher, author, public speaker, pointed out about Indian music that: "Indian music encompasses an immensely wide world. when listening to it, one experiences nothing in particular, nothing one can put one's hand on, and yet one feels alive in a most intense way. By following its different tones, one actually listens to oneself."

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p. 153).

Anne C. Wilson adds: "It must, therefore, be a secret source of pride to them to know that their system of music, as a written science, is the oldest in the world. Its principles were accepted by the Mahommedan portion of the population in the days of their pre-eminence, and are still in use in their original construction at the present day."

(source: **A Short Account of the Hindu System of Music - By Anne C. Wilson** p. 9).

"While Western music speaks of the wonders of God's creation, Eastern music hints at the inner beauty of the Divine in man and in the world. Indian music requires of its hearers something of that mood of divine discontent, of yearning for the infinite and impossible." Mrs. Mann,

(source: **The Music of India - By H. A. Popley** South Asia Books ASIN 8185418063 p. 136).

Arthur Whitten observes: "Their (Hindus) scale undoubtedly resembles our diatonic mode, and consists of seven sounds, which are extended to three octaves, that being the compass of the human voice. Their voices and music, like ours, are divided into three distinct classes: the bass, called odarah, or lowest notes: the tenor, called madurrah, or middle notes; the soprano, called the tarrah, or upper notes. The similarity of the formation of the ancient Hindu scale to our modern system is noteworthy. We name the sounds of our scales: Doh, Ray, Me, Fah, Sol, La Te. Those common in India are: Sa, Ray, Gam, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni,"

(source: **The Music of the Ancients - By Arthur Whitten**).

Dr. Arnold Adrian Bake (Editions of Damodara's **Sangita-darpana**) has said:

"It is impossible to divorce Indian music from the whole structure of Indian culture and philosophy." "A show of instrumental agility in which words have no importance or hardly any, but which for perfection of speed, neatness and precision of intonation, has perhaps no equal anywhere in the world."

(source: **The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde** p. 218).

Gustav Holst (1874 - 1934) composer of **S¯avitri ; The dream-city**, **Choral hymns from the Rig Veda** and **S¯avitri; an episode from the Mah¯abharata, Op. 25** He was Vaughan Williams' greatest friends. Despite his German name, Holst was born in Cheltenham in 1874. This English composer composed operas about **Sita** and **Savitri** and other works based on Hindu themes. **It was in 1895 that Holst first became interested in Hindu philosophy and Sanskrit literature.** His immediate impulse was to set some hymns from the **Rig Veda,** the most important of the Hindu scriptures, to music. The most notable of many works springing from Holst's preoccupation with Hinduism was the chamber opera **Savitri** dating from 1908, based on an episode from the epic poem **Mahabharata**: its economy and intensity are exemplified in the arresting and dramatic opening, where Death sings, offstage and unaccompanied. From 1908 to 1912, he wrote four sets of hymns from the Rig Veda, the Vedic Hymns for voice and piano, and the large scale choral work called The Cloud Messenger.

(source: http://hem.passagen.se/alkerstj/worldofclassicalmusic/early20th/gustav_holst.html and http://wso.williams.edu/~ktaylor/gholst/). For more refer to chapter on **Quotes271_300**).

Joachim-Ernst Berendt (1922-2000) author of **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound** has written: " Nada Brahma is a primal word in Indian spirituality, a primal word that also refers to India's great classical music. Nada is a Sanskrit word meaning "sound." The term nadi is also used to mean "stream of consciousness," a meaning that goes back 4,000 years to the oldest of India's four sacred Vedic scriptures, the Rig Veda. Thus the relationship between sound and consciousness has long been documented in language.

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p. 1-20).

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Mantras

Many people mediate on a mantra. A mantra is a sacred sound that may be an entire phrase, a single world, or even a syllable. What does the word mantra mean? The syllable mantra means “intelligence,” also “thinking” or “feeling” – everything that distinguishes a human being.

Mantras emerge from the mantric sound, in Sanskrit bija, or “seed.” Mantras are germinating seeds that sprout oneness. They are tools of becoming one. The greatest of all mantras is “**OM**” Indra’s pearl, although no larger than all other pearls contain all pearls of the world – and just as, according to recent ideas in particular physics, the events in a single electron “contain” all the nuclear events in the world. In the Upanishads: “Whoever speaks this mantra thirty-five million times, the mantra of the sacred word, shall be released from his karma and from all his sins. He shall be freed of all his bonds and shall reach absolute liberty.”

Nada Brahma, the world is sound. The sages of India and Tibet as well as the monks of Sri Lanka fee that if there is a sound audible to us mortals that comes close to the primal sound that is the world, then it is the sound of the sacred word OM.

A quote from the **Upanishads**:

The essence of all beings is earth,
the essence of earth is water,
the essence of water are plants,
the essence of plants is man,
the essence of man is speech,
the essence of speech is sacred knowledge,
the essence of sacred knowledge is word and sound,

The essence of word and sound is Om.

(source: **Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt** Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180 p. 26-29).

Chant and music were conceived of as mediums for expressing the inward yearning of a man's very breadth and therefore his soul. This was symbolized in the Sanskrit word 'prana.'

Michael Pym has observed: "Sound - shabda - is the manifestation of what might be called the principle of pure intelligence working upon and through matter. In another sense it is the creator of form and the animating principle of form. The idea resembles that of the Greek Logos - the word of creation. Sound is also the quality of inherent property - in Sanskrit the guna - of akasha or ethereal space. There are two forms of sound, unlettered and lettered, the latter proceeding from the former.

Sound is mantra, force or energy; name is form the grosser aspect of the principle. Indian music of the classical type represents something near the essence of existence at a particular moment. The immediate effect of Indian music is not as striking as Western music, but it is in the end, far more insidiously intoxicating. Between the two types of music, the difference is almost like that which exists between getting drunk on spirits and being drugged. The parallel even continues to this point, that once you have really become attuned to Indian music, Western music, beautiful as it may be, becomes too obvious and too tiring for you...And then you begin to understand how **the subtle, pattern weaving music of India conveys India; how the philosophic, imagist music of the raga,** with its one theme varied in a thousand ways, never beginning, and never finishing, but just

becoming audible and going again into inaudibility, is the **real expression of India's sense of eternity - beginning in the unknown and going beyond our ken."**

(source: **The Power of India - By Michael Pym** p. 170 - 182).

An integral aspect of this Vedic 'culture of sound' is the so called science of mantrashastra. The Word is Brahman; the Word is Revelation, an icon of the Absolute, murti - a 'momentary deity'. Words, magical formulae, sacred verses - mantra - exist in relation to the divine as the yantra to the god; words are machines. Words are the Vedic yoga: they unite mind and matter. The Word is God, Number is God - both concepts result in a kind of intoxication. Only the Pythagorean Master can hear the music of the spheres: only the perfected Hindu sage can hear the primordial sound - Nada."

(source: **The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society - By Richard Lannoy** p. 275-276).

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Conclusion

'Self-realization' mans God-realization. In ancient times, **Yajnavalkya,** the famous law-giver, wrote:

"One who knows the principles of playing the veena; one who is in expert in jati, and has the mastery of sruti and tala attains to moksha without any effort.'

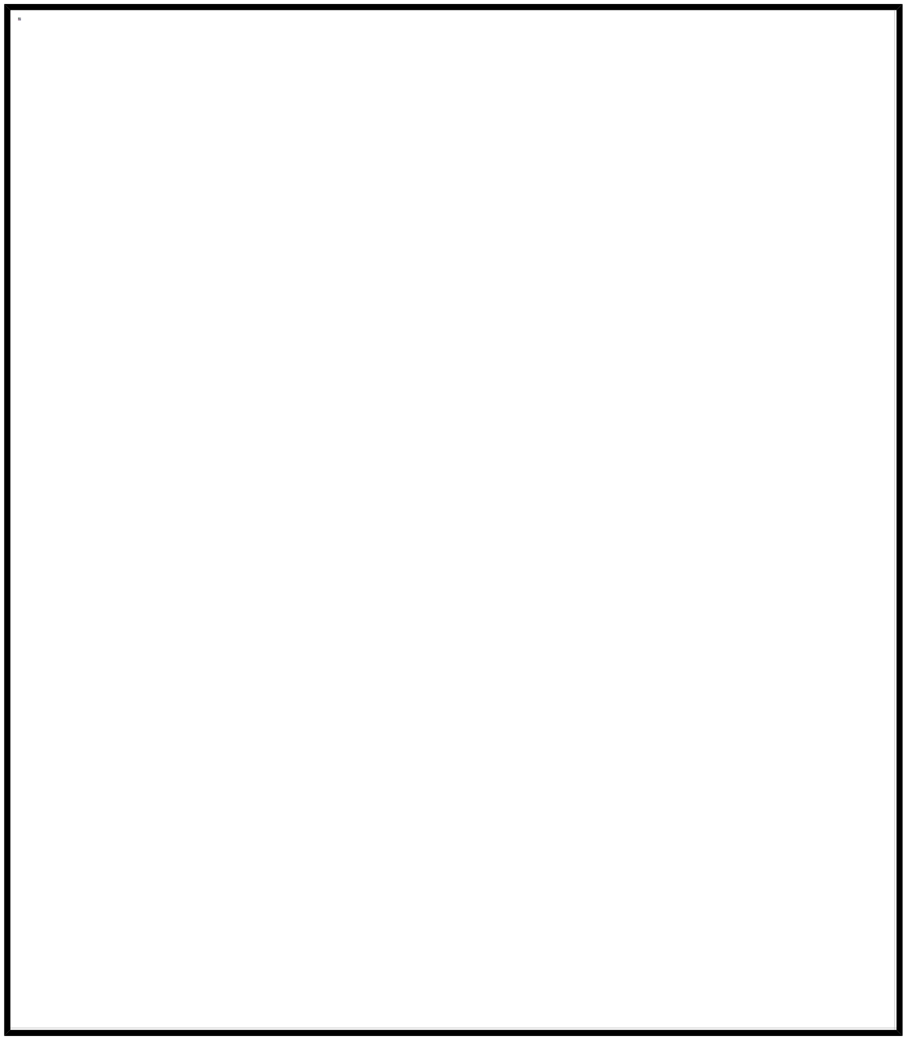
Thyagaraja, the famous 18th century saint/musician of South India, declared in his Sripapriya that music is yoga: "Music which is composed of the seven svaras is a treasure for the great tapasvins (ascetics) who have cooled the tapatraya (the world of nvolvment). Moksha is impossible for one who has no music in him."

"Those who sing here," says **Sankaracharya**, "sing God"; and the **Vishnu Purana** adds, "All songs are a part of Him, who wears a form of sound."

Many historians, both in the East and the West consider the Gupta Empire between the 4th and 6th centuries A.D. to have been the "renaissance of Indian music." At that time Sanskrit as a classical literature took form, and music, stimulated by the lively ideas of the period, achieved new proportions.

Explaining it for the Westerner the great poet and Indian Nobel prize winner, **Rabindranath Tagore** wrote: "For us Hindus, music always always has **a transcendent meaning**, even when its intentions are by no means mystical or religious, but epic and amorous. Above all, music tries to touch the great hidden reasons for happiness in this world."

"It is precisely because of this that Indian musicians aspire above all things, to realize the complete identification between the imperfect soul of man and the perfect soul of the divine nature. **Hindu music** aims at creating a point where the beautiful and ugly, good and bad can meet, not on the dangerous level of compromise, but on a level of the absolute. For this reason, our music is paradoxically a combination of chords and discords, equals and opposites. It willingly runs the risk of seeming to be, in fact being, fragmentary and inconclusive."



Ragmala - Rajput school, 18th century A.D.

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"Our everyday life often, our music always, appears contradictory to the sophisticated eyes of the West. We do not hesitate to recognize in the sublime paradox, the ultimate, perhaps the eternal meaning of the serene, ordered, and happy world of sounds generated by gods and governed by men."

Thus, music is considered to be of divine origins; legend has it that the three divinities who preside over the Hindu pantheon, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, are themselves accomplished musicians, and that it was they who taught the great laws of musical expression to the first codifiers of Indian music. Ravi Shankar's description of his life as a disciple of spiritual music underscores this point. His practice would begin at 4:00 am. After two hours he would bathe and do his morning spiritual practice. Shankar stated that "total humility and surrender to the guru" were expected; "a complete shedding of the ego" was the goal. About the musical culture of India's ancients, Shankar says:

"There is no dearth of beautiful stories relating how great musicians and saint-musicians such as **Baiju Bavare, Swami Haridas** or **Tan Sen** performed miracles by singing certain ragas. It is said that some could light fires or the oil lamps by singing one raga, or bring rain, melt stones, causing flowers to blossom, and attract ferocious wild animals - even snakes and tigers - to a peaceful, quiet circle in a forest around a singing musician. To us in this modern, mechanical, materialistic age, all this seems like a collection of fables, but I sincerely believe that these stories are all true and that they were all feasible, especially when one considers that these great musicians were not just singers or performers, but also great yogis whose minds had complete control of their bodies. They knew all the secrets of tantra, hatha yoga, and different forms of occult power, and they were pure, ascetic, and saintly persons. That has been the wonderful tradition of our music."

Legends abound in the annals of India's music, attesting to the **extraordinary prowess of India's devotional musicians.** Indian music has always placed emphasis on vocal expression over instrumental. The best instrumental is thought to be that which renders most faithfully the subtleties of the human voice.

Ravi Shankar has written in his autobiography:

"Our tradition teaches us that sound is God - Nada Brahma. That is, music of sound and the musical experience are steps to the realization of the self. We view music as a kind of spiritual discipline that raises one's inner being to divine peacefulness and bliss. We are taught that one of the fundamental goals a Hindu works toward in his lifetime is a knowledge of the true meaning of the universe - its unchanging, eternal essence - and this is realized first by a complete knowledge of one's self and one's own nature. The highest aim of our music is to reveal the essence of the universe it reflects, and the ragas are among the means by which this essence can be apprehended. Thus, through music, one can reach God."

The sparkling energy of India lies in Hinduism. Without the framework of Hindu belief India would fall apart even today. Without Hinduism India is not herself. "It is impossible," **Dr Arnold Bake** (1899-1963) the late Dutch scholar of Indian music, has written in The New Oxford History of Music, "to divorce Indian music from the whole structure of **Indian culture and philosophy** with which it is interwoven in a number of ways from the earliest times of which we have records."

(source: **The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde** p. 37-39).

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Books used for this Chapter:

1. The Music of India - By Herbert A Popley
2. India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal
3. Ancient Wisdom for Modern Ignorance - Swami B. V. Tripurari
4. The Musical Heritage of India - By M R Gautam
5. North Indian Music - By Alain Danielou v 1- 2
6. Hindu Music - By S. M. Tagore
7. Nada Brahma: The World is Sound - By Joachim-Ernst Berendt Inner Traditions Intl Ltd ISBN 0892813180
8. The Music of India - By Peggy Holroyde

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Music Site to visit:

Indian Classical Music

Sanatana Dharma - Music

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Did You Know?

Gypsies - Lords of the Open Country

Romanies or Gypsies as they are popularly known, had their origin in India. They are the descendents of tribes who left the banks of the Indus, traversed a number of intervening countries over a period of centuries, and arrived in Europe more than five hundred years ago, where they have been severely persecuted. **Gypsies, the long-lost children of India,** number about 12 million worldwide. In Europe, the 8 million Gypsies constitute its largest minority. During World War II, the Nazis exterminated 1.5 million Gypsies.

Despite their significant contributions to European cultural life over a period of centuries, Europe on the whole has not accepted them with kindness. They have been frequently persecuted throughout the period of their known history. European countries have a sordid record of Gypsy-persecution. Half a million Romany gypsies from across occupied Europe were killed in the Holocaust - yet that fact is now largely forgotten. Soon after their arrival in Europe they were characterized as a people who spoke a strange language and practiced sorcery. In 1427 the Bishop of Paris excommunicated them and they were driven out of the city. Even today, gypsy women are often seen begging with infants in Paris.

A gypsy on the road knows the taste of real liberty and he regards modern man as little more than a mere cog in a gigantic machine tied to money, convention, and a timetable. Throughout the centuries Gypsies have fought and suffered numerous humiliation and penalties to retain their own individuality, freedom, language and cultural identity.

Considering that there are many Greek words in the Gypsy language, and that all Gypsies still count in Greek, Verovici is of the opinion that the first exodus of the Gypsies from India happened at the time of Alexander's invasion. On the other hand, Grellmann believed that the Gypsies had been driven out of India by Timur and his savage hordes at the end of the 14th century. Charles Leland, who identifies the Gypsies with Northern India, suggests that they were taken away in large numbers as slaves by Mahmud of Ghazni during his Indian invasion.

The Gypsies speak a language called Romany which has many common words with Indian languages. **The religion of the Gypsies is a modified form of early Hinduism.** Romani is related to Sanskrit in the same way as the Romance language are to Latin. The following list of cardinal numbers illustrates the point. The sentence is generally constructed in the same way in Romani and Hindi. For example:

Romani: Ja, kik kon chalavelo o vurdo.
Hindi: Ja, dekh kaun chalaaya dvar ko.
English: Go and see who has come to the door.

Romani: Mero sero dukkers.
Hindi: Mero sir dukhe.
English: My head hurts.

Gypsy heritage of laws and customs can be identified with ancient Indian practices. The wise and learned men are called **rashey**, **reminiscent of the Indian rishi, occupy in India**, a highly esteemed place in Gypsy society. Amongst the authentic signs on the sceptre of a Gypsy tribal chief is the trishul (trident), the insignia of Shiva. Gypsy chiefs are still called **Thakur**. The elders of the tribe are addressed respectfully as kako, meaning uncle, a Hindi word of the same meaning. The feminine version of the tribal chief is called **phuri dai**, which in Hindi is **burhi dai**, the old lady. The Gypsy council of elders is clearly a replica of the Indian panchayat, and the Gypsy chief corresponds to the head of the panchayat. The

Gypsy family system is a joint one, as is the Hindu embracing parents, children, aunts, uncles, and all kinds of cousins. Likewise, property belongs to the family and not to the individual.

In Indian and Spanish Gypsy music there is, unlike in Western music a luxuriance of cross rhythms, elaborate ornamentation, and quarter tones, unknown to Western music, are common to both Hungarian Gypsy and Indian music. The Gypsies mentioned by **Firdusi** and the Arab historian, **Hamza**, were expert lute players, and it has been suggested that it was probably they who introduced the lute to Europe.

Gypsy dance has influenced western dance styles like the Waltz and the foxtrot. Even the American Break dance and other dances associated with jazz music have borrowed elements from the gypsy folk dance. The Gypsy folk dance, is itself a free flowing and care free dance, a modified version of which is found in the folk dances of many Adivasi and nomadic tribal communities in India. Gypsies have displayed an adaptability towards the religious beliefs of the countries in their path. Many practice their faith with deep devotion. They call the Bible **the Sastra, the Sanskrit name for scriptures.** Gypsies believe in **Karma** and some kind of continuation of life after death.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Michigan State Univ Pr ASIN 0870131435 p.234 - 266).

Saip Jusuf is the author of one of the first Romani grammars and a principal leader in Skopje, Macedonia, which has the largest Gypsy settlement anywhere. Jusuf helped organize the first world Romany Congress in 1971 in London. The conference was financed in part by the Government of India, and at its urging the U.N. agreed first to recognize the Rom as a distinct ethnic group and several years later accorded voting rights to the International Romani Union.

In an interview with the author, Jusuf, having converted from Islam to **Hinduism, joyously displayed his new icon collection of Ganesha, Parvati, and Durga** . Ramche Mustupha, a poet, showed his passport. Under "citizenship" it recorded Yugoslav; under "nationality," Hindu. **The lost children of India, having found their ancestral land, are very proud of its ancient civilization -- the oldest continuous civilization in the world -- "Amaro Baro Thanh" (Romani for "our big land").**

Isable Fonseca author of **Bury Me Standing: The Gypsies and their Journey** has observed: "Many of the young women, fed up with the baggy-bottomed Turkish trousers they were supposed to wear, have begun to wear saris."

(source: **India Star.com**)

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